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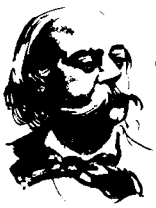

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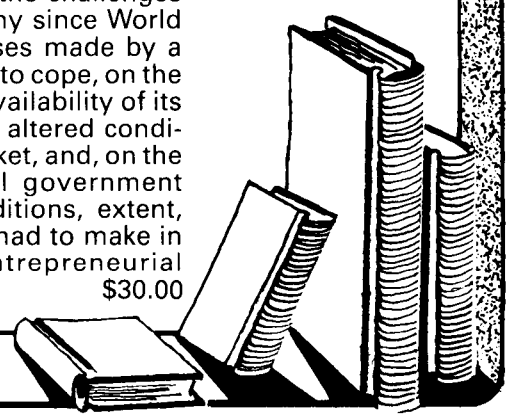

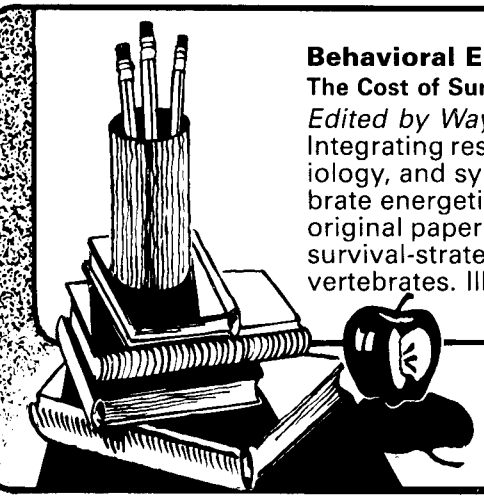

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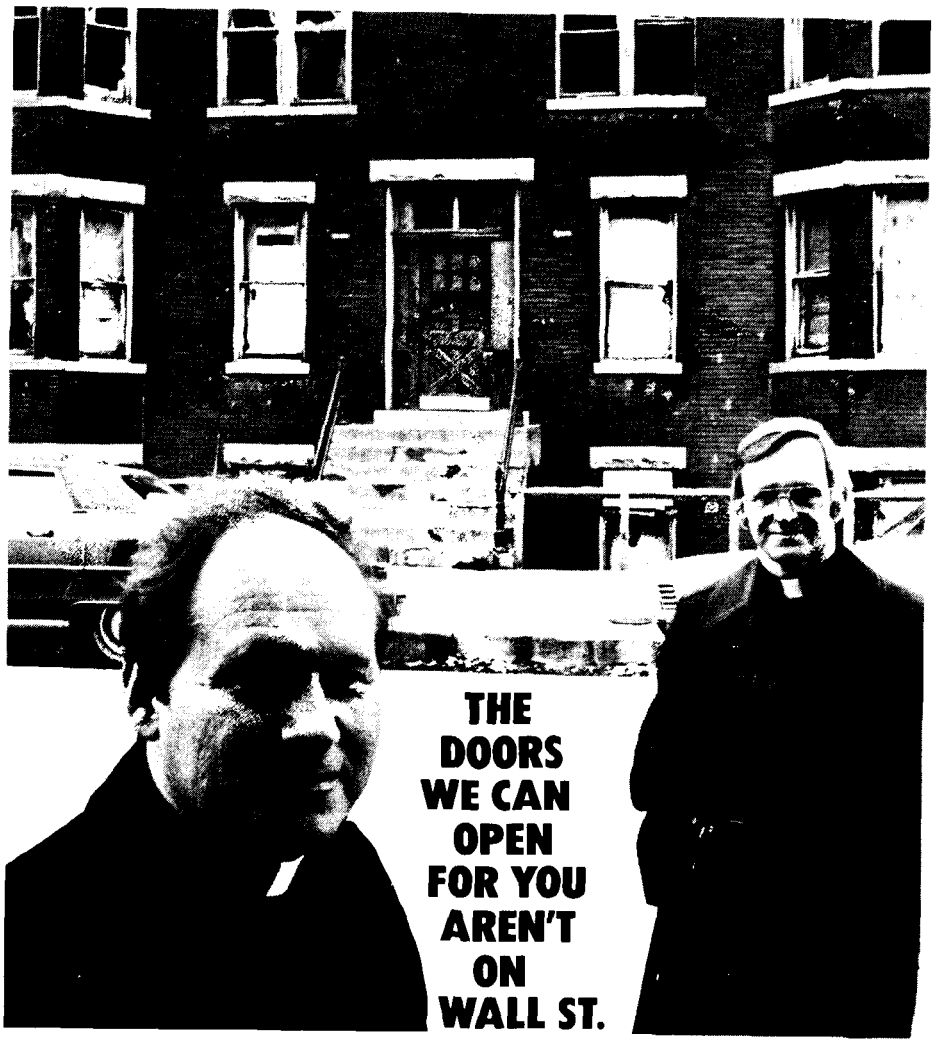

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Life and Letters

Penography

ARISTIDES

A fetish—finally. Ah, sweet mystery of life at last I've found you. And just in time. I have for so long liked a lot of things a little that it is exhilarating to like a little thing a lot. I speak of fetish neither in the primitive nor the sexual meaning, but rather in the sense of fetish as an object for which one has an obsessive devotion, a slightly irrational reverence. My fetish speaks for me and I through it. It is for pens, fountain pens specifically, and I tell you straight out, Doctor, I have this thing for fountain pens—I am nuts about them, Doctor, do you hear me, absolutely bonkers!

Evidently I am not alone in this madness. I am told that fountain pens are currently making a small comeback in popularity. Magazines carry advertisements for them; department stores and office supply and stationery stores display them prominently. Not that fountain pens are exactly sweeping the country. Few drugstores any longer carry ink, though once they all did. I doubt if many schoolchildren at present use fountain pens. Whole generations have by now grown up inkless, learning to write with ball-point pens and felt-tipped markers. Some members of those generations are discovering the pleasures of the fountain for the first time. For me, it's the second time.

I returned to using fountain pens roughly five years ago. But I am old enough to have used wooden penholders and steel nibs in grade school, and to recall teachers coming round to fill our inkwells from gallon jugs of board-of-education ink. I spoke above of pleasures, but what a spectacular mess those ancient instruments could make! Blotting paper was part of the pencil box of every child. The rigid metal of the nibs combined with the drippings from the ink could make writing a wretched business. Only a few years later—around fifth grade—did I come to use my first fountain pen, an Esterbrook, a rather blunt-looking instrument, which came in an orange-brown color over something akin to a herringbone pattern. The Esterbrook was a sturdy pen, a Model A among pens; it did not leak—much—and I believe it then cost $1.49.

By this time, age eleven or so, my handwriting was already quite ruined. At least I myself never cared for it. Nor did any of my grade school teachers. The slant of my letters was erratic; letters that should have been closed (*s*'s, *p*'s, *d*'s) were often left open; neither my ascenders nor my descenders were of a uniform height or depth; my capitals were pretentious in the extreme; even my periods lacked authority. Graphologically speaking, I was a disaster.

This was no minor disaster, either; for penmanship, as instruction in handwriting was called, was one of the important grade school subjects. Every child had a penmanship manual offering instruction in something called the Palmer Method, and daily we practiced the loops and slants of what was felt to be classical cursive handwriting. One day an instructor from the company that published the manuals visited our school. A tall slender woman with a southwestern accent, she did capital *O*'s and *S*'s at the blackboard. "Swat, swat, swat that skeeter!" she called out as she made the long slanted line of the *S*, then looped it at its top for the trip down and back. Her aim, and that of the manuals, was to give us all clear, regular, and quite uniform handwriting.

This was, of course, an enterprise destined for failure. A person's handwriting is one of the distinctive things about him, and no two handwritings, like no two sets of fingerprints, are the same. There is something about handwriting that seems to cry out for the expression of idiosyncrasy. Circles for dotting *i*'s,

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Gothic touches on capitals, swooping flourishes at a word's end—there is no graphic stunt people won't try in the effort to be elegant and individual. Handwriting is tied up with what people nowadays are pleased to call their "identity." It is a most intimate matter, and richly complicated.

If a graphologist were to have examined my youthful handwriting, he might well have diagnosed an identity crisis. (Family therapy, he might even have concluded, was indicated.) Perhaps it is in one's handwriting that one first sets out to create a style for oneself. The handwriting of my childhood was part Palmer Method, part imitation of my father's handwriting, part Declaration of Independence signature—and what was left was me. It didn't, if I may say so, come off. I secretly thought that my poor handwriting was a sign of poor character. Had I been a girl, I should have been in serious trouble. Some boys did have nice handwriting, but boys were not really expected to have nice handwriting. Girls, though, were under an *obligation* to write beautifully. To fail in that regard was tantamount to failing hygienically. A girl with poor handwriting seemed nearly a slut. I don't recall any girls in our class with poor handwriting. It wasn't allowed.

I brought an additional difficulty to the job of handwriting. I was precocious in one thing only: I learned to print letters before I went to school. In doing so I taught myself to hold a pencil—and, later, a pen—in a manner I can only describe as highly individual. It involved an odd bunching of fingers around the writing instrument, a bunching that resembled nothing so much as the bout-ending hold of a wrestler named Cyclone Anaya, which he called the Cobra Twist; added to this was an odd turning inward of my wrist, which led most people to think I wrote left-handed. Naturally I hid this unorthodox grip from my grade school teachers, though I refused to give it up for my serious writing (and have only finally done so a few years ago). Wicked friends were always amused by this grip; kind strangers, when first seeing it, assumed I had a debilitating muscular disease.

Holding a pen as I did, no pen was my friend. Fountain pens were, though, a very big item when I was young. A comedy record, spinning a joke off the fact that fountain pens were so frequently given as bar mitzvah gifts, had a young Jewish boy announce in his bar mitzvah speech, "Today I am a fountain pen!" Many were the manufacturers of fountain pens: Eversharp, Sheaffer, Parker, Waterman, Wearever. Owning an expensive pen and pencil set seemed a mark of very great distinction. Such a set was part of an elegant man's accoutrement, which in those days might include cuff links, a key chain, a money clip, a small gold pen-knife, perhaps a signet ring. But the expensive fountain pen was knocked out of the box—or, rather, pocket—by the ball-point pen. The first ball-point pen was invented by a Hungarian named Laszlo Jozsef Biro and patented in 1939. But it rose to prominence when it was marketed in this country by a man named Milton Reynolds, who produced a pen called the Reynolds Rocket. The Reynolds Rocket sold for $12.50—a big figure in 1945—and the claim made for it was that it could write underwater, which it could. Above water, though, it was scarcely any good at all. Nonetheless, on October 29, 1945, the first day it was marketed at Gimbels in New York, ten thousand were sold.

Ball-point pens rose even higher in popularity as they fell in price. They had much in the way of convenience to recommend them: they didn't blot, they didn't require refilling, they were eminently disposable, rather like toothpicks. Being for the most part made of plastic, ball-point pens became part of that body of items one used and threw away. Or if one didn't exactly throw them away, it was no great heartbreak if they became lost, because, first they were not very expensive, and second one had developed no attachment to them. It is difficult to imagine anyone, even a child, feeling saddened because he has lost his favorite ball-point pen.

To the degree that ball-point pens rose in popularity did the general interest in handwriting seem to fall off. The early ball-points tended to skip, and even the more expensive ones seemed to run away with one's handwriting. A fit analogy here might be that of driving a car with a gearshift or driving one with an automatic transmission. The automatic transmission (the ball-point) had much to recommend it, but the gearshift (the fountain pen) gave you a great feeling of control. My own handwriting, poor with fountain pens, became fully hideous with ball-point pens.

"What is handwriting but silent speech?"

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Erasmus wrote. "How warmly we respond whenever we receive from friends or scholars letters written in their own hands." And he continued: "An elegant script is like a fine picture; it has a pleasure of its own which engages the author of a letter while he is composing it no less than the recipient when he is studying it." Thus, thank-you notes, letters of condolence, and other missives of a personal kind seem to call for handwriting, as if handwriting is the most personal, and hence most sincere, form of communication. When Henry James began to dictate his novels and letters to a series of typists, he mounted elaborate Jamesian apologies to his correspondents for "this cold-blooded process," also referring to it as this "fierce legibility" and "the only epistolary tongue of my declining years."

Of course, there is something talismanic about handwriting. How else can one account for the attraction of autographs and the passion of autograph hunters, be they either children or hardened professionals? Writing that comes from the hand of an admired or famous person is perhaps as close as one can get to touching that hand. The apostle Paul was supposed to have written to the Galatians in his own hand. Imagine what the autograph of Jesus of Nazareth would bring on the open market! One way of calibrating contemporary fame might be to find out whose signature among contemporaries fetches the highest price among autograph collectors.

An author's signature is felt to enhance the value of a book. On a few occasions I have been asked to sign a hundred or so copies of books I have written. It sounds a charming thing to do, one of the triumphant rites of authorly achievement. In fact, after signing the first half-dozen copies, it becomes inexpressibly boring. In a used-book store I once came across the book of a well-known critic, affectionately inscribed to a famous novelist; the affection was evidently less than reciprocal, else what would the book be doing in a used-book bin? At first, I found this highly amusing; then I thought that perhaps I had seen something I oughtn't to have seen. The novelist would probably have done better to rip out the signature page before he sold the book. Selling the book with the inscription seemed, somehow, slightly sacrilegious, almost as if the recipient were selling a part of the author's spirit, or the man himself.

Few novelists still consider a person's handwriting part of his or her character—something, in any case, to be noted, like the color of a person's eyes or his smile. Thackeray, though, was a novelist who did, whenever the chance permitted, note his characters' handwriting. In *Vanity Fair*, one of his characters writes "a fine mercantile hand," another writes a "schoolboy hand"; of yet another character Thackeray remarks that he had "the best of characters and handwritings." As for their own handwriting, many writers surprise. Proust, for example, wrote a loose and inelegant hand, where one would have expected quite the reverse. Max Beerbohm's handwriting is just as one would have expected: compact, clear, with very little slant. Wordsworth wrote in a small, cramped hand. But the smallest handwriting is that of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who trained himself to write as small as possible so that his books would come to fewer manuscript pages and thus would be easier to hide and smuggle out of the Soviet Union. Evelyn Waugh wrote a clear hand with many an interesting idiosyncrasy—in an otherwise cursive handwriting he wrote his *r*'s as if they were printed capitals—and, with his penchant for marching backward, ever backward, he wrote with a wooden penholder and steel nib.

As some people imagine what a writer looks like, I think of what his or her handwriting looks like. William Plomer, the English man of letters, has filled in some of these blanks for me. In his memoirs he not infrequently describes a person's handwriting. Christopher Isherwood's handwriting he calls "imperturbable." Lady Ottoline Morrell's proclaimed her "not a type but an individual." Virginia Woolf's handwriting, "sharp, delicate, and rhythmical as her prose, was pleasing in itself." Of the blanks that remain blanks, I could be quite wrong, but I imagine writers of voluminous works—Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy—to have had scrawling, untidy handwriting, with little or no interest in crossing *t*'s and dotting *i*'s. In this connection I recall a charming scene in Henri Troyat's biography of Tolstoy. Troyat pictures the great writer in his upstairs study at Yasnaya Polyana, turning out page after page of *War and Peace*, while downstairs his wife and older children are reworking each page into "fair copy." It is a scene worthy of a Russian Jane Austen. As for

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Jane Austen, I imagine her handwriting to have been very neatly formed indeed—exquisite crewelwork, like her novels. But then I tend to think—quite without any knowledge to back it up—of eighteenth-century handwriting as small and elegant, nineteenth-century handwriting as strong and sprawling.

As for twentieth-century handwriting, allow me, solipsistically, to put forth my own. It is a hodgepodge, a cacophony on the page. Erasmus had it that elegance of handwriting is primarily based on four things: the shape of letters, the way they are joined, their linear arrangement, and their proportion. Of these four, I should say that I do only one, joining letters, passably well. Of the remainder, I make a frightful botch. Inconsistency is the chief difficulty. In the same word I will loop the descender of the letter *p* and then bring the same descender down a few letters later without a loop. I may end one word with a flourish tantamount to a deep bow from the waist, then end the next without so much as a by-your-leave. What is more, I am not even consistently inconsistent: every so often I will turn out two or three beautifully formed words in a row. At forty-five I continue to fool around with my signature. If I hold up two of my own signatures, they sometimes seem to me as if written by two different people. I am surprised that by now my bank hasn't reported me for forgery of my own name.

I am what people schooled in the rude jargon of Vienna call an anal type—or, more precisely, I aspire to anality, insofar as that Freudian term means a love of tidiness, a rage for order. I say aspire, for this love, this rage, has remained an aspiration only. Still, applied to handwriting, it is for neatness that I yearn. What I desire is endless elegant notebooks filled with penetrating observations, all written in a fine script. As it happens, I do keep a journal, but not in elegant notebooks. I fear that the reason for this is that my handwriting is not up to expensive paper. My handwriting on costly stationery would be like chili on Limoges china.

What, I wonder, would graphologists make of my handwriting? What, I further wonder, do I make of graphology? The purpose of graphology is to relate elements of a person's handwriting to traits of his personality. Sometimes this is done in a most general, and therefore most unhelpful, way, as when large handwriting is said to characterize a large-spirited, ambitious person and small handwriting to characterize a mean-spirited, pedantic person. But when graphologists get more specific they do not necessarily get more persuasive. Here, for example, is Huntington Hartford, an ardent graphologist and author of a book entitled *You Are What You Write*, on the significations of dotting the *i*:

> An "i" dot before the letter means procrastination, for example, and beyond it, impatience; a club-shaped "i" dot, temper, brutality. There are three or four meanings peculiar to the "i" dot, however, about which most graphologists agree. For some reason they often link the dot precisely placed above the "i" with a good memory and a wavy dot with a sense of humor. (I am not 100 percent convinced!) They ascribe a critical faculty to those who, in superior scripts like those of Einstein, Lessing, and Pasteur, connect the dot with either the preceding or the following letter. Finally, there is the "i" dotted with a complete little circle. Before the days of Walt Disney, with the circular dot over the "i" in his famous signature, Louise Rice informed us . . . that the users of this sign are "the adapters of art."

Important if true; if not true, then amusing. I at any rate find it amusing, but many eminent intellectuals and artists have found graphology more than amusing; among its adherents have been Madame de Staël, Goethe, Poe, Leibniz, and, in our day, Randall Jarrell. Foolish though graphology may seem in its particulars, most of us, I suspect, believe in it a little, if only in an ex post facto way. A book review editor, speaking of a writer who had failed to meet a deadline, not long ago said to me, "From his creepy handwriting I should have known not to trust him." Similarly, if I show you a handwriting filled with energy and obvious confidence, then tell you that this is the handwriting of Sigmund Freud—whose handwriting, very rhythmic, does so seem—you are likely to say, "How appropriate!"

Can madness be revealed in a person's handwriting? Graphologists tend to think so, and so did the late John Cheever, who, in his story "The Five-Forty-Eight," uses handwriting as a clue to mental breakdown. The chief character in this story notes of his secretary, with whom he is to enter into a love affair, that "he had found only one thing in her that he could object to—her handwriting." Cheever continues:

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He could not associate the crudeness of her handwriting with her appearance. He would have expected her to write a rounded backhand, and in her writing there were intermittent traces of this, mixed with clumsy printing. Her writing gave him the feeling that she had been the victim of some inner—some emotional—conflict that had in its violence broken the continuity of the lines she was able to make on the paper.

On the other hand, judgment by handwriting must clearly be guarded against. In his novel *Lament for the Death of an Upper Class*, Henri de Montherlant puts the case for the anti-graphology point of view very neatly, when of a meek and terrified character he notes: "It is amusing to observe that M. de Coantré's writing, very upright, well formed and weighty, the signature, heavily underlined and the lines rising, would, according to the rules of graphology, have made one attribute to the writer all the qualities of character in which he was most certainly and most completely deficient."

Yet, within very strict limits, handwriting can reveal traits, if not of character, then of personality. In a person's handwriting, one can often read his aspirations—toward orderliness, elegance, grandeur. Handwriting can also reveal pretentiousness, affectation, exhibitionism, and many another minor excess. Or take illegible handwriting. What does it say about a person that his handwriting is illegible? I should say that it speaks to a sense of self-importance. American physicians are famously illegible. Horace Greeley wrote in a hand so illegible that letters of dismissal from him were often used by fired employees as recommendations for new jobs, for all that new employers could usually make out was Greeley's signature.

Illegibility has never been my problem; legibility has been. My clear dissatisfaction with my clear handwriting has brought about my fairly recent interest in fountain pens. My hope here is for a technological solution: a better writing instrument will make for a better handwriting—or so I reason. Thus far, though, I have been forced to conclude, in the fashion of the public relations wing of the National Rifle Association, that pens don't kill handwriting, people do.

Meanwhile I am building up quite a nice arsenal of fountain pens. I have the little dears on my desk before me. Let me take inventory: two rather dud Sheaffers, one maroon with gold trim, one black with silver cap; two Parkers, one a 1932 model in black and gray horizontal stripes with a dull silver clip, the other sleek black, with a cap in two different shades of gold and a beige stone at its top; a dark red Waterman, silver trim, a slender little jobby with a stainless steel point; a Pelikan, black with gold trim and a removable point; and, finally, in my hand, the fine Swiss pen, a Mont Blanc, No. 24, black with gold trim and Mont Blanc's traditional six-point star at both top and bottom. Owning so many pens may seem extravagant, but I myself think this a quite modest collection. My family, I know, is grateful that I do not go in for skywriting.

Different strokes for different folks, and different pens for different yens. Sometimes I have a yen for the streamlined feel of my gold-capped Parker; sometimes I have a yen for my Pelikan, which is feathery light; sometimes I have a yen for my 1932 Parker, which, along with its being half a century old, gives off a delicious smell of ink (I warned you we were talking here of a fetish). My Mont Blanc is most serviceable for writing lengthy things. Sheaffers are often my choice for writing checks. I tend to travel with my Waterman, which is the only one of my pens with a cartridge ink supply. I am not, I should say here, one of those gents who walks about with nine pens, a six-inch ruler, and an air gauge in his shirt pocket, all tucked into a plastic shield that has Fergusson's Hardware & Supply printed on it. No, I prefer to pick out and wear a single pen to fit the mood of the day, rather like picking out and wearing a necktie.

I continue to look for the perfect pen—the pen, you might say, ultimate. I read catalogues from pen companies with an intensity similar to that with which men, long at sea, read *Playboy*. I check stationery shops; at antique stores I inquire whether they have any old pens in stock. Who knows, I may come across a Waterman Patrician, first manufactured in 1928, or the splendid plastic and rolled gold Mont Blanc of the mid-1960s, or the costly French-made S. T. Dupont at a vastly cut-rate price. What I am looking for, of course, is a pen that feels exactly right, that will flow along in exact cadence with my thoughts—indeed, whose even flow will cause ideas to flow in me. Choice of a fountain pen, after all, entails the same meticulous

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attention to individual preference as does, say, choice of a tennis racquet: weight, grip, balance—each can affect performance crucially. As for ink, I find myself regularly buying new brands, trying out new colors, mixing like a mad chemist one with another . . . but I had better not get started on the subject of ink.

Since we are talking here about a fetish, allow me to report a recent dream. In this dream a friend of mine produced from his suit-coat pocket a pen—a somewhat battered Mont Blanc with a partially translucent green top—which, he announced with a smile, had once belonged to Rudyard Kipling. Even in my sleep I was ill with envy for his ownership of that pen. But I arose the next morning with what I feel is a winning marketing idea. Why not autograph model fountain pens, on the order of Chris Evert tennis racquets, Jack Nicklaus golf clubs, Pete Rose baseball gloves? Why not, in other words, Dante, Shakespeare, Jane Austen pens? True, fountain pens did not come into use until 1884, when the firm of L. E. Waterman produced the first usable ones, but this is a mere technical difficulty that can be surmounted. Patent, meanwhile, pending.

The market for this particular item might be severely limited to one—me. I have always been inordinately interested in the conditions of composition. Whenever I read a literary biography I linger lovingly over the descriptions of the rooms in which writers work, of their oddities and idiosyncrasies in the actual act of writing. Hemingway, for example, wrote standing up at a high desk; W. H. Auden amidst a clutter of paper and cigarette ash; William Faulkner in a shed behind his house in Oxford, Mississippi. (Faulkner, incidentally, had a most deceptive handwriting; it was straight up and down, small, fine, and extremely tidy, when, given his flights of rhetoric, one would have expected thick strokes, slashes really, strewn messily about the page.) Theodora Bosanquet, Henry James's secretary-typist, wrote a charming little book on James's work methods; in it she compared taking dictation from James to accompanying a fine singer on the piano.

Nothing so facilitates writing as actually having something to say, yet the conditions under which, and the tools with which, writing is done can contribute to facility—or to difficulty. From my own experience, the one time I can recall having a truly wretched time getting writing done—the one time, that is, when the problem was neither knowing what I wanted to say nor knowing how to say it—was when I had recently bought an Olivetti portable typewriter with italic type. No sooner had I brought that machine home than I realized I had made a mistake. How I loathed the look of that type on my pages! Everything I wrote seemed, in that type, arrhythmic, dull, stupid. I put the typewriter to the test by typing out on it a paragraph from E. M. Forster, a few sentences from Orwell, and four or five lines from a poem by T. S. Eliot—all of which seemed to me, in that type, arrhythmic, dull, stupid. This machine, I concluded, must go. And go presently it did. I traded it in—traded down, as they say on the used-car lot—for a Royal standard twenty years older than the Olivetti. We, the Royal standard and I, have lived happily ever after.

As for pens, the search goes on. I note those among my acquaintances who use fountain pens and those who do not. In movies my interest peaks whenever someone writes a letter. In Ken Russell's film about the life of Gustav Mahler, Mahler, when composing, used a long and elegant black pen of a kind I have never seen before or since. Do composers and choreographers, I wonder, use special pens? In the recent television series made from the memoirs of Albert Speer, whenever the actor who plays Hitler signs a document he uses the large Mont Blanc Diplomat (current U.S. price $210). This is a pen I have long admired yet do not quite covet. The pen is almost a bit too grand, a bit too pretentious. I myself would be embarrassed to take it out in public, for it seems unsuitable for anything less momentous than, say, signing a declaration of war—something I do not often do. Putting such a pen into the hand of Hitler, however, seemed an altogether appropriate touch. Give that propman an Emmy.

Some people wish to live surrounded by art, others require high-powered and finely mechanized automobiles. All I ask for is a pen. True, I am looking for a perfect pen, a Bucephalus, a Joe DiMaggio, a Sarah Vaughan of a pen. This would be a pen that would make my handwriting worthy of the approbation of the sniffiest Jane Austen heroine. From it ideas would flow in orderly profusion. It

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would blot when breaches of good sense, self-deceptions, and lies were written with it. Held loosely, it would toss off charmingly witty sentences; pressed down upon, it would touch the profound. It would permit no dull patches; only brilliance would issue from it: penetrating insights, fantastic formulations. Writing with such a pen would be like cantering along the Pacific Ocean on a palomino, instead of what writing really is—stopping and starting in a junk wagon down a thousand broken-up alleys. What a glory it would be to own such a pen! I keep searching, ever hopeful, even as I am confident that, were I to find such a pen, no ink for it would be available.

1904

FREDERICK MORGAN

The things they did together, no one knew.
It was late June. Behind the old woodshed
wild iris was in blossom, white and blue,
but what those proud ones did there no one knew,
though some suspected there were one or two
who led the others where they would be led.
Years passed—but what they did there no one knew,
those summer children long since safely dead.

FREDERICK MORGAN is co-editor of the *Hudson Review*. His most recent books are *Death Mother and Other Poems* and *Northbook*.

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Endings

RUTH GAY

FOR ME THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY DREAM of Jewish emancipation began to crumble in Dubrovnik in the summer of 1981. More precisely, it happened in the third-floor synagogue of the Jewish community house of Dubrovnik, a fourteenth-century building with ogive windows that had survived the earthquake of 1667, that had survived the Italian and German occupations of the city during World War II and had now become a ghostly memorial to half a millennium of Jewish life. There had been one hundred fifty Jews in Dubrovnik before World War II, and there were now ten: six old men and four old women, all who came back after the German deportations of 1943. I visited the synagogue one morning with two Yugoslav friends who had arranged, with some difficulty, an introduction to the head of the community. Emilio Tolentino, a bony old man of eighty-three, who wheezed with the effort of climbing the stairs to the synagogue, and in a language that began as English and shaded into German, told us about himself and his evaporating congregation. Although his family had lived in Dubrovnik since the sixteenth century, the memory of their Spanish origin remained powerful and immediate. Expelled from Spain in 1492, his ancestors had stopped first in Italy, where they had remained long enough for the family name to be transformed from Toledo to Tolentino.

They had then migrated across the Adriatic to Dubrovnik (then called Ragusa), and nearly three hundred years later the descendant of that family was still given an Italian forename—Emilio. My Dubrovnik friends had warned me that memories were long in the Balkans, that ancestral sagas, histories of old wrongs, dreams of revenge, bonds and attachments were as vivid five hundred years after the fact as they had been when the events had first occurred. As we sat listening in the beautiful, panelled seventeenth-century room, the layers of Tolentino's loyalties and memories became a rich palimpsest in which nothing was obliterated. In recounting the luminaries of the Jewish community, he did not fail to claim for Dubrovnik the Nobel Prize winner, Enrico Fermi. The Fermi family, it is true, had moved to Italy some centuries

✪ RUTH GAY's essays have appeared in *Commentary*, *Dialogue*, *Horizon*, and other magazines.

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earlier, but it was their history and their origin in Dubrovnik that, for Tolentino, were decisive.

The synagogue took up the top floor of the narrow, medieval building and evoked in miniature the great synagogue of Amsterdam, the walls shimmering with rich dark wood, lit by long, low-hanging brass chandeliers, supplemented by Turkish glass oil lamps, a reading desk in the center and a women's balcony above. On the rare occasions when the synagogue is used in Dubrovnik these days, the congregation must first find among the tourists four Jewish men to complete a *minyan* (the quorum needed to conduct services). Here then was the end of the congregation that had lived in unbroken continuity on the Jews' Street (still so named) for six hundred years and whose community building was already a museum visited by us and other curious American Jews, in our sunglasses and slacks, as a haunting relic of a vanished life. The brilliant Adriatic sunshine that fell into that narrow, steep street and the whistling of the swifts swooping over our heads could not dispel the feeling, as we emerged from the building, that we had been at a grave site. Of the seventy-two thousand Jews in Yugoslavia before the war, ten thousand returned from the Nazi deportations. And in 1948, eight thousand of these migrated to Israel. The remaining Yugoslav community, now centered largely in Belgrade and Zagreb, is not part of that special Adriatic-Latin-Ragusan history that we had witnessed and represents in only a fragmentary way the Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions that had once flourished in these Balkan centers.

After Dubrovnik, my next stop was Munich, the most glittering of German postwar cities, where the nightly promenade of beautiful people in evening dress on the steps of the opera house is something that I thought only existed in *New Yorker* ads for expensive whiskeys and automobiles. In Munich, though, I was on familiar ground, having spent some time there in 1974. The Jewish community, which I had come to know, then counted some four thousand souls, largely East European Jews who had settled there most uneasily after the war. A tiny number of returned German Jews made up a disproportionate percentage of the officials of the Jewish community, presumably because of their linguistic advantage in dealing with city officials. Despite their enforced union, the gulf between the East European and the German Jews remained as wide, and the antagonism as strong, as if the war and the camps had never been.

From a prewar strength of nine thousand with seven synagogues, of which two were magnificent structures prominently located in the center of the city, the community had retreated to four invisible houses of worship. The main one was in a courtyard behind a bland adminis-

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trative building in what had been the prewar Polish Jewish quarter, and it had miraculously survived both the depredations of Hitler's gangs and the bombings during the war. What was not invisible was the more or less "I told you so" attitude on the part of the East European Jews toward the German Jews. What good had their German patriotism done them, their service in the German wars, their total acculturation, even their shared antipathy with fellow Germans toward the *Ostjuden*? To Hitler and his henchmen it made no difference; they were still Jews.

It was true that they, the East Europeans, had remained in Germany after the war, but, as they always insisted, living "on their packed suitcases," planning and preparing to leave for Israel. The earlier dream of the German Jews that they could be "German citizens of the Jewish faith" had been thoroughly demonstrated to these East European Jews to have been a colossal mistake. It was the virulence of these feelings—that Jewish emancipation was an illusion, that Judaism implied a perpetual ghetto—that gave me pause in the summer of 1981, as it had during much of my growing up.

What had marked the life of the German Jews during the nineteenth century had been their tenacious and, it seemed, winning battle for emancipation. To the poor Jews of Eastern Europe, however, such of the discussion over emancipation as reached their remote villages was irrelevant as long as they were still waging an elemental struggle for existence. And when they came to the United States in the first decades of this century, they continued that struggle, ill prepared for anything else, with a defensive, suspicious, self-protective posture toward an alien outside world. Grateful though they may have been for the safety and opportunity that America afforded them, they were nonetheless bewildered trying to find their just place in the society. As with many other impasses, it was one they decided to leave to their children to resolve.

As an American Jew, born in 1922 of East European immigrant parents, the stance of constant apprehension that I met in Munich was familiar to me from my earliest years. Yet in New York City it was also tempered by the sense of the possibilities that America offered. Possibilities, it is true, that would not be realized, on the whole, by that immigrant generation, but remained to be explored by their children. As I now look back on these feelings, I perceive a striking parallel between what we thought then and what the German Jews had been striving toward since Moses Mendelssohn. In the face of endemic anti-Semitism, of official exclusion from the universities, professions, business, and public office, in the face of social snobbery and steady reminders of their otherness, German Jews had managed to develop a sense of themselves

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as Germans without the reservations that were to color the consciousness of their East European fellow Jews who migrated to the West. It was perhaps this immovable, imperturbable certainty that was so exasperating to the East European Jews. The facts did not support such unshakeable convictions, and yet generation after generation of German Jews spoke German, felt like Germans, behaved like Germans.

Caught up, as we are, in the emotions unleashed since the war by the revelations of the camps, we have forgotten that in the 1920s and 1930s, the American Jewish community was moving toward Americanization in exactly the pattern of the German Jews. For people of my generation there was still enough unmasked anti-Semitism around for it to color our daily behavior, our choice of education, a career, places to live, and our general sense of expectation. It is because we behaved in one way and felt another that those of us who experienced those decades can best understand the seemingly contradictory behavior of the German Jews.

When I was in high school in New York City between 1935 and 1939, my friends and I avoided certain restaurants because we believed that they were anti-Semitic and would not serve us. It was well known that there were certain clubs that would never permit us to enter their doors. The great private universities and their medical and law schools admitted as few Jews as possible, and these were stigmatized and excluded from the passionate friendships that made up such a large part of the student experience of the period. Jews, it was understood, were simply not socially acceptable. The Yale University yearbooks for those decades, for example, have a phrase that captures the isolation of the Jewish students who managed to gain admission. As part of the biographies in the yearbooks, each student's place of residence in the college and his roommates were listed. Next to the name of the Jewish student was almost invariably the phrase: "He roomed alone." It was a large price to pay for an education.

So we set our sights cautiously, expected the worst, and yet. . . . And yet, in the face of all we knew and experienced, like the German Jews of pre-Hitler Germany, we, too, believed in the inexorable march of progress. We believed what we were taught in our civics classes in public school by our various condescending Miss Mullaneys and Miss Moons—that America was a free country, that all citizens were equal, that it was a melting pot. That last was slightly unsettling because it implied a homogenized people (then a newly introduced way of treating milk) with an "American" way of doing things. It expected that in time all the odd ways of eating, drinking, and thinking that the immigrants had brought with them would wither away. Indeed, we, the children of the immigrants, were rather charged by our Miss Moons with the responsibility for hastening the process and came home from our civics

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lessons with the latest injunctions on how we and our parents were to behave if we wanted to be real Americans. I think our parents did not rejoice in these revelations as much as we did, since such behavior opened a new line of authority and inevitably undermined their position. To us, however, these messages from Miss Moon were a source of power. They gave us, at a very early age, an institutionalized counterforce to our parents and the heady sense that we were creating our lives according to a new pattern as befitted the citizens of a new world.

So despite our awareness of social exclusion, despite the limitations in careers, despite the closed neighborhoods, America still offered possibilities undreamed of in the Eastern Europe our parents told us about. An irreproachable civil service system guaranteed fair treatment and an entrée to a white-collar career. Free public high schools and colleges placed higher education within the reach of anyone whose family could afford to keep him while he studied. And while real-estate covenants kept us out of Greenwich and Bronxville, we weren't crowded into ghettos. Neighborhoods in New York City that are now burned-out slums and scenes of daily violence were once the locale of pleasant Jewish working-class family life. Eastern Parkway, in Brooklyn, to name one, now the boundary of a no-man's-land was then a glorious tree-shaded promenade where amorous couples strolled on summer evenings. In its extent and grandeur it was the natural main artery of a heavily populated, richly organized Jewish community. It seemed to us, at the time, that the walk-up tenements in the streets off Eastern Parkway provided decent, comfortable housing. They were reasonable in cost, well kept up, well heated in winter, and were surrounded by familiar stores providing everything from three cents worth of soup greens to a full set of bedroom furniture. Of course, we knew about "downtown" and "department stores," but these seemed more like museums than places where actual cash transactions took place. We were cautious in our exploration of the world, consulting long and earnestly with one another as we tested our new experiences.

Ultimately, we thought, unaccented speech and decorous behavior were a passport to almost anywhere. Speech became a fetish with the members of this generation who all their lives heard cautionary tales of careers ruined by a dentalized "t" or an overripe diphthong. The topos was the story of the prospective young teacher who had placed first or second in a field of a thousand on the written part of a qualifying examination only to be rejected at the oral. Some of the high schools ran special speech classes to correct the worst sins of our English and produced, in New York at least, a hybrid way of speaking that sets apart to this day those would-be teachers, social workers, and civil servants who were subjected to these courses.

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What happened to Jews in America in the first part of this century was a transformation on a monumental scale that took place with unprecedented rapidity. The emancipation that in Germany had been unthinkable for a thousand years, that had then been cherished and fought for as a desperate and passionate hope over the entire nineteenth century, became a reality in a few brief decades in the United States. It was as if the East European migrants had leaped over Germany not only in space but in time, and their children, born in the Golden Land, reaped rewards whose significance they could not even fathom, taking as a matter of course what other Jews in other countries had only laboriously managed to achieve.

Memories have different scales in different cultures, and Jewish history is not embarrassed to think in millennia. Yet the latest chapters in American Jewish history are measured in decades while German Jewish history goes back to Roman times—a fact that may help to explain a certain tenacity about Jewish life in Germany.

The history of Jews in Germany begins on the Rhine and runs peacefully enough for the first millennium. Early settlements are recorded from the fourth century in Cologne and Trier, with the Jews living in clusters around their synagogues, recognized as a special group, but also deeply engaged in the life of their towns. Chronicles of the bishops of Magdeburg, Metz, and Mainz describe how the Jews of these cities in the eleventh century followed the biers of the bishops on their death and lamented and prayed for them in their synagogues. Not exceptional is the story of Bishop Rüdiger of Speyer who, in 1087, determined to build the village into a city. As part of his plan he invited a number of Jewish families to settle there in the conviction that he would thereby "increase the lustre of the city by a thousand times."

Hard times begin with the first Crusade in 1096 when it was suggested to the marauding Crusaders that there were infidels to be killed at home as well as abroad. A few bishops (at Würzburg and Coburg) are remembered for gathering "their" Jews into their fortified castles to protect them from harm. But the second Crusade in 1146 showed that violence and destruction were to become the pattern rather than the exception, and so it continued in city after city, epoch after epoch until the French Revolution brought some hope that Jews, too, had the right to live.

When Napoleon's armies conquered the German cities along the Rhine, they brought with them the Napoleonic laws that unambiguously and unconditionally extended full rights of citizenship to Jews. But these rights were tied to the fate of Napoleon, and as he fell, so did these prizes of war. Over the next decades, the governments of the various

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German principalities played a cat-and-mouse game with the Jewish communities, extending and then withdrawing privileges. In Prussia, for example, the Jews were accorded equal rights of citizenship by the Edict of 1812. In 1816, however, after the defeat of Napoleon, the edict was withdrawn, the Jews were divided into six classes, and only those in the first class were entitled to the rights previously enjoyed by all. At the same time, to make life even more perplexing, the kingdom was divided into thirty different districts, each with its own variations on the restrictions and freedoms permitted to Jews. In Bavaria the Jews were recognized as citizens in 1813, but their simple right to exist and procreate remained in doubt. The old laws devised to limit Jewish population remained in force so that in each family only one child could inherit the right of residence. Marriages were permitted only with the permission of the police, and then only when the couple could show the possession of substantial wealth. Meanwhile the artisan and merchant guilds remained adamant in refusing to admit Jews to their trades, thereby restricting the ways open to them to earn a living. Is it any wonder that in this period the disappointment and sheer frustration of life under these circumstances led nearly half the Jewish youth of Bavaria to emigrate to the United States?

Yet while local dukes and princes played with privileges, the life of German Jews developed a momentum of its own. At the same time that Jews were still excluded from many trades and public office, when they were still confined to a ghetto in Frankfurt or pushed into a newly created one in Lübeck (in 1816), the various states and principalities were permitting or requiring Jewish children to attend state schools. The most significant single force in bringing about this transformation had been Moses Mendelssohn, who saw language and secular learning as the twin keys to emancipation. Although Mendelssohn had not been alone, he became the emblematic presence for Jews in Germany in the late eighteenth century, exhorting, teaching, and, in his own life, demonstrating the transition from the Jewish world to the larger world. What was astonishing was the rapidity with which German Jews adopted the language, the culture, and, to a large degree, the life around them. In the half century after 1780, when Mendelssohn first published his German translation of the Bible (albeit in Hebrew characters) and founded the Jewish Free School in Berlin, the Jewish community took its first decisive steps toward integration. Most important was the change in language, as Jews began speaking German rather than Yiddish. This language, which had crystallized on the Rhine in the ninth century out of Romance, Hebraic, and Germanic elements, and had been in use for nearly a thousand years, vanished in Germany in a few decades. With it vanished the sense of separation, a change that transformed the self-

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image and aspirations of the young. With German speech and education, they could hope to enter the university, the army, the government. They began to set new goals for themselves personally and for the Jewish community as a whole. It was a time that marked the beginning of what Gershom Scholem has so wickedly called "the unrequited love affair between Jews and Germans."

This evident love affair was unfathomable to East European Jews, and I remember, from my own early years, my parents' way of merging the Germans and the German Jews into one repugnant whole. That the German Jews no longer spoke Yiddish excluded them from that camaraderie of those who shared a secret language. But that they actually embraced the values of the land in which they were living was antithetical to every principle of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. There the government was the enemy to be evaded and outwitted at every turn—in taxes, schooling, the law courts, and, above all, in military service.

From the first, however, German Jews committed themselves unreservedly to their country. Gabriel Riesser, the first Jew to become a judge in Germany, expressed some of his generation's feeling about their Germanness, although not without a tinge of desperation. "We are not immigrants to this land," he wrote. "We have been born here, and because of that we have no claim on a homeland anywhere else, we are either German or without a country." Or on language: "The powerful ring of the German language, the verses of German poets have kindled and nourished in our breasts the holy fire of freedom. We want to belong to the German fatherland and be part of every village and town." In much the same fervent tone, David Friedländer, a leading communal figure, wrote to the king of Prussia in connection with the promulgation of the Edict of 1812: "Now we have only one Fatherland: Prussia. It is only for this country we pray. Our mother tongue is German. Only when we have translated our prayers into this language can our religious services be awakened to new life."

Indeed, it was not long before the entire traditional life came under scrutiny, with religious teaching and customs being subject to study on new systematic grounds. In 1819 an enthusiastic small group of Jews in Berlin founded a society for the scientific study of Judaism (Wissenschaft des Judentums), which examined its institutions with all the apparatus of modern scholarship and sought authority for the reform of the synagogue ritual through meticulous research into its past.

Nor was the ferment confined to religion. As the Jews emerged into the social and cultural scene, the anomalies of their position became more striking. The most famous and yet most poignant figure in this period of early Jewish emancipation is Heinrich Heine, whose bitter

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uneasiness led to his baptism—which resolved nothing for him, but, as he said, made him equally despised by both Jews and Christians. Yet many Jews in quite open desperation turned to baptism as a way of compliance with the legal requirements for appointment in universities, in the legal profession, and in government. Eduard Gans, one of the founders of the Wissenschaft des Judentums, for example, only a few years after its establishment, converted to Christianity in order to be able to hold a university post.

What is so remarkable about the development of the German Jewish community at this period is its unevenness. On the one hand, there was a large number of disenfranchised Jews, living on sufferance in the patchwork of three hundred German states, with restrictions on their occupations, education, and even on their very numbers. On the other hand, there was a small number of privileged Jews with brilliant positions in the world at large. Thus, while Jews in Prussia were coping with six degrees of status, a triumvirate of learned and wealthy Jewish young women in Berlin was conducting salons that attracted an international array of luminaries in the arts and sciences.

It was a pattern of inconsistency that German Jews learned to accept, but which did not deter them from their almost messianic belief that ultimately they would be confirmed legally, socially, and institutionally in their rights as both Germans and Jews. Some ideas have more beauty than truth, and, especially when first propounded, they are so dazzling that they cannot be perceived in any but their most absolute form. So the first protagonists of emancipation (from both the Christian and Jewish sides) could only envisage a gradual melting away of differences. In the heat of their enthusiasm, the Jews were ready to accept a rather unequal aspect of the bargain—namely, that it was largely *their* differences that were to be melted away.

Looking back on that period, even as late as 1937, Ismar Elbogen, the foremost German Jewish historian of his time, was able to evoke the hope and expectation of the community. "A feeling of pure joy," he wrote, "filled the German Jews in the period after 1848. They lived with the sense that they had achieved great things. They believed that progressive developments would bring them victory and had the satisfaction of seeing that the defense of their rights had become a question of general rights and that those with a sense of justice were on their side. More and more they could use their powers freely and had their share in the brilliant economic developments in the country."

These hopes were encouraged by the flourishing economic position of the Jews in Germany as, in a century of expanding industrialization and trade, they found their place on many levels in an increasingly commercial society. By the time of full legal emancipation in 1871, 60

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percent of German Jews counted themselves among the middle and upper middle class. Despite restrictions on educational and professional opportunities, they prospered in business, in the liberal professions, and the arts. So much so, in fact, that Germany became a magnet for emigrating East European Jews. Beginning at the bottom like all immigrants, they became the Jewish proletariat in Germany and, by 1933, accounted for nearly 20 percent of German Jewry.

Coming from poor villages and towns where they had lived in abysmal poverty for centuries, the East European Jews also came with expectations, hopes, fears, and desires shaped by an environment totally different from that of the German Jews. In contrast to the current romanticization of shtetl life, their actual situation nourished neither the body nor the soul. Excluded as they were from land ownership, the professions, most trades, and government service, and herded into wretched villages, the Jews in Eastern Europe subsisted in conditions of filth and deprivation. At the end of the 1870s when Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria was escorted through the London slums, his guide, the economist Karl Menger, contrasted what the prince was seeing with the Jewish situation at home. "The people whom you see here," he said, "are by comparison 'Gentlemen.' When you want to see poverty, real, absolute, gruesome poverty you have to go to the Jewish quarter in Cracow." The state of the Jews in Galicia was, if anything, worse. "These people are so poor," said von Grienosz, a Polish deputy in the Imperial Parliament in 1893, "they are so crowded in their living quarters that they take turns using their beds. . . . Their only sustenance is frequently an onion and a crust of black bread." It was estimated that in a population of eight hundred thousand Jews in Galicia, five thousand died of malnutrition every year.

But if Jews learned to accept poverty, they could never forget that they lived surrounded by hostile and alien peasants and hostile and alien governments and that their physical existence was as precarious as their economic condition. At the moment when the Jews in Germany were beginning to win their way out of the post-Napoleonic reaction, Czar Nicholas I developed a particularly diabolical answer to the "Jewish problem." By a decree of 1827, young Jewish boys were to be conscripted into the army for twenty-five years, which would guarantee by the end of their service either their conversion to Christianity or, at the very least, a Russification or de-Judaizing of their lives. While recruits were normally conscripted at the age of eighteen, Jewish children could be taken as early as twelve, and since the term of enlistment was not counted until the recruit had reached the age of eighteen, the Jewish conscript might serve as much as thirty-one years. A lifetime.

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In the cynical way that was echoed a century later when Hitler began setting quotas for his death camps, the Russian authorities made the Jewish communities responsible for supplying the requisite number of children, and under these circumstances, boys as young as eight or nine were sometimes caught and sent off. Their pathetic condition has been described by no less an eyewitness than Alexander Herzen, who in 1835 met a convoy of these children in the district of Vyatka. When Herzen inquired about them, the escorting officer told him:

> "Well, sir, you see, they got together a bunch of these accursed Jewish youngsters between the age of eight and nine. I suppose they are meant for the fleet. . . . At first the command was to drive them to Perm. Now there is a change. We are told to drive them to Kazan. . . . Half of them will not get to their destination," he added.
>
> "Epidemics, I suppose?" I inquired, stirred to the very core.
>
> "No, not exactly epidemics; but they just fall like flies. Well, you know, these Jewish boys are so puny and delicate. They can't stand mixing dirt for ten hours, with dry biscuits to live on. Again everywhere strange folks, no father, no mother, no caresses. Well then, you just hear a cough and the youngster is dead. Hello corporal, get out the small fry."
>
> The little ones were assembled and arrayed in a military line. It was one of the most terrible spectacles I have ever witnessed. Poor, poor children. The boys of twelve or thirteen managed somehow to stand up, but the little ones of eight and ten . . .
>
> Pale, worn out, with scared looks, this is the way they stood in their uncomfortable, rough soldier uniforms with their starched turned-up collars, fixing an inexpressibly helpless and pitiful gaze upon the garrisoned soldiers, who were handling them rudely. White lips, blue lines under the eyes betokened either fever or cold. And these poor children, without care, without a caress, exposed to the wind which blows unhindered from the Arctic Ocean, were marching to their death . . .

Memories such as these burned themselves into the consciousness of the Jewish communities that lived under the Russian yoke, so it is no wonder that, for generations, Russification was a state to be contemplated only with horror. The Westernization and acculturation that for the German Jews meant freedom and prosperity was synonymous in Eastern Europe with slavery and degradation. The chronicle of the remainder of the century can be filled with accounts of expulsions of communities from their homes, book burnings, ritual murder trials, and pogroms. It was not a climate to foster patriotism, and indeed from the 1880s on, as the age of mass-steamship travel opened, Russian Jews fled the land of their birth. Some settled in Germany, as we have seen, and between 1899 (when the United States first began keeping records of "Hebrews") and 1914, one and a half million Jews came to the United States.

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When one compares the lives of the Eastern and German Jews, one does not need to be an economic determinist to see how powerfully their conditions of life shaped their attitude toward their country. Rich Jewish merchants in Saint Petersburg in 1856, petitioning Alexander II for an extension of Jewish privileges, sound very much in intent, if not in style, like German Jewish merchants in their wish to level the "sharply marked traits which distinguish the Jews from the native Russians" and in their hope that the Jews would "in their way of thinking and acting become akin to the latter." Once placed outside their secluded pale, the merchants continue in a painfully servile vein: "The Jews will succeed in adopting from the genuine Russians the praiseworthy qualities by which they are distinguished. . . ." Yet even these rich merchants do not dare to ask for equal rights, but, as Simon Dubnow, the great historian of Jews in Russia and Poland, points out, they "content themselves with miserable crumbs and privileges for only 'the best among us.' "

The tiny number of Jewish students admitted to secular Russian high schools and universities also found Russian culture intoxicating, even if its adoption implied a rejection of what they came to see as the obsolete, superstitious life of their parents. In Russia, as in Germany, the passion for secular culture seemed to require complete assimilation. In those first stages there appeared to be no way to yoke Jewish tradition with any other.

The problem of how to live with two seemingly incompatible cultures was no less perplexing to my generation. We, too, wanted to escape from the culture of East European Jewish life, and many of us adopted the stratagem of creating watertight compartments in our lives with a different persona for each. That we could not manage the two worlds at once may have had something to do with the absolute, apodictic nature of East European Jewish tradition. There the meshing of daily life and religion was so entire that there was no room for variation. Since any violation of a part of the code brought down the whole structure as we knew it, we were faced with a fundamental choice: to live as our parents did or to venture into the vast world beyond them. What seemed to us implacably strong was perhaps this tradition's real weakness. When we were young and impatient with compromises, the leap into the strange Western world was irresistible, even if it meant leaving behind much that we would only later, painfully, reclaim.

Our parents had had neither our aspirations nor our problems. In the countryside in Eastern Europe, the Jews and the peasants lived in matched, completely enclosed systems of belief, each with its rituals, magic, witches, and demons, and united only by a mutually felt contempt. It must also be said, at once, that in the maddeningly contradictory way that defies science, they also grew used to one another, much in

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the way of whites and blacks in the American deep South. Between individuals and families there were sometimes deeply felt loyalties, and each group had incorporated the other as part of its accepted framework of life. But for each, the other was the permanent enemy, always viewed somewhat warily, understood but never trusted.

For the mass of Jews in Eastern Europe, then, who lived as eternal pariahs, there was no way into Russian or Polish life, which was based not only on a national but also on a religious unity. The rhythm of life in Eastern Europe was determined as much by the church calendar as by the seasons, and in such a world the Jew was forever the outsider.

It is no wonder that the Jews in Eastern Europe developed no patriotic organizations, no sentiments of attachment to the language of the land of their birth, and that only a thin layer of intellectuals was caught up in any kind of cultural identification. For the majority of Jews, living in Yiddish-speaking enclaves under crushing economic conditions, acculturation solved nothing. Their situation fostered, instead, socialism, Zionism, fervent Chasidism, and emigration to the West. The main contrast between all these solutions with what was happening in the West is that they were predicated upon very little hope for either political emancipation or for rapprochement between the Jews of Eastern Europe and the peoples among whom they lived.

The views of these East European Jews as to their place in the world changed dramatically once they were settled in the United States. With some financial and political security, with limitless possibilities for their children, with first-class citizenship, acculturation became, for the first time, a real possibility. In one generation America did what centuries of persecution in Eastern Europe had not been able to do: it broke apart forever an encapsulated Jewish life.

In the decades after World War I, American Jews of East European origin were following the identical path that had been followed by the Jews in Germany in the previous century. They stopped speaking Yiddish; they sent their children to secular schools; Reform Judaism flourished, and Conservative Judaism was overtaking the old Orthodoxy. They were acculturating at a galloping rate as many bitter jokes of the period attest—for example, the mother who comes to visit her doctor son at his Park Avenue apartment house but sits forlornly in the lobby because she cannot remember his new name. And far from seeing the Lower East Side as picturesque, the native-born generation migrated from the first neighborhoods of settlement to more respectable, more hygienic, more affluent parts of town as soon as they could.

The flight from the center was not only physical; it was symbolic of the flight from the old Jewish life, of the discomfort with the old ways. Something of the brittle nature of this discomfort is captured in a

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brilliant scene in Meyer Levin's novel, *The Old Bunch,* in which a chic young couple invites their friends to a Seder. When the guests are called into the dining room they see as the centerpiece, not the ritual plate with three wrapped matzos, but a towering cake. "If you can't eat bread," say their hosts gleefully, "eat cake." This scene has haunted me since I first read it, because in its cruel way it pointed to some of the absurdities that we fell into. These were the pitfalls. But along with a permanent uneasiness, and the distance of the perpetual observer, becoming an American also gave us an odd angle of vision that had its own rewards.

When Elliot Cohen founded *Commentary* magazine in 1945, he saw as his mission the recapturing of the intellectuals who at that moment seemed to be in a headlong escape from Jewish life. He himself came from an Orthodox Jewish family in Mobile, Alabama, and had gone to Yale, entering in 1914 as a child prodigy of fifteen. As a young man, he had been an editor of the *Menorah Journal,* had worked as publicity director of the Federation of Jewish Charities, and now, as editor of a new Jewish magazine, he wanted to reclaim the young talent that he saw rushing into secular anonymity. Although his charm was formidable, I doubt that he alone could have made much headway. It took a catastrophe to reverse the pressure toward Americanization with its concomitant abandonment of language, custom, religion, and identity.

Beginning with the spring of 1945, when American troops began to discover the concentration camps in Germany, the horror and amazement at what had happened opened a new epoch in American Jewish thinking, turning it from its preoccupation with the future to a sudden contemplation of the past. Against the horrific background of death and annihilation, the ornaments of Western culture seemed suddenly frivolous, and American Jewish intellectuals felt themselves constrained to consider yet again who and what they were. While they were not ready to give up their long-held commitments, the stresses began to fall differently. Continuing to read Henry James, they also studied Maimonides, revived their Hebrew, and considered whether to teach their children Yiddish. The most widely held and most fundamental formulation was finally, "I will not let five thousand years of Jewish history die with me," as if the responsibility for continuity weighed all the more heavily on every surviving Jew, now that there were fewer Jews to sustain the tradition.

But the place of the Jew in the world has never been only a Jewish problem. The revelations of the camps raised questions that Christian theologians and philosophers also needed to answer; and one of the most widely discussed articles of the time was Jean-Paul Sartre's "Portrait of the Inauthentic Jew," which appeared in *Commentary* in 1948. It was

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based on the premise that "the Jewish problem is born of anti-Semitism; thus it is anti-Semitism that we must suppress in order to resolve the problem."

For Sartre, with a philosopher's absoluteness, the geometry of the world was full of fixed points: the permanent Christian possession of nation and race (only Christians were authentic Frenchmen), the permanent exclusion of Jews from the national community, their permanent physical difference in appearance and ways of thinking. Thus, concludes Sartre, "authenticity is for him to live to the full his condition as a Jew; inauthenticity is to deny it or to attempt to escape from it."

This, of course, was precisely the agonizing question. What were the characteristics, what was the content of an authentically Jewish life? The reintegration of the past with the future took many forms—for some institutional, for some private. While many young secular Jews turned to the established synagogue, others experimented with private study groups or prayer groups that echoed the old, informal "shtiblekh" of their parents' generation. In attempting to re-experience Judaism by reinventing its form, they had stumbled on one of its oldest, most enduring devices. In every way American Jewish life sobered up, and there was a distinct sense that the past had become the permanent charge of every Jew.

These were also the years that saw the emergence of Israel as a sovereign state and with it the emergence of that new man, "the Israeli." The effort of that new man to separate himself from the Diaspora Jew had existed even before Israel's political recognition. Ernst Simon has described the desire of various youth groups in Palestine in the late 1940s "to create a conscious separation between the old 'Jew' and the new 'Hebrew.'" More recently an embattled Israeli, a journalist on *Davar*, formulated the same distance in different words. "The children of this country," he said, "are not Jews anymore. Or maybe it's that we are Jews but not Jewish."

Where does all this leave the Jews of the United States? The map of the world has changed dramatically for Jews in the last fifty years. The two major Jewish communities of Europe—Germany and Poland—representing two major traditions, are ended. Hitler *did* wipe out the German Jewish community. There are thirty thousand Jews in Germany today, but they are not descendants of that pre-Hitler community. In the main, they are survivors from the death camps of Eastern Europe who remained in Germany after the war; there is also a colony of Iraqi and Iranian Jews who arrived in Hamburg in the late 1940s in flight from hostile regimes; there are Soviet Jews in Berlin, part of the emigration of the 1970s; and there is a handful of German Jews who returned to finish out their days. The continuity with the old struggle, the old aspirations,

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the old dreams has been broken forever. The astonishing flowering of Jewish talent and Jewish life that was nurtured on German soil in the brief century of emancipation came to an abrupt and brutal end in 1939.

Was it the end of an epoch for the Germans as well? At least one historian of Germany, Gordon Craig, playing with the same dangerous ideas about national character as Sartre, contends in *The Germans* that the end of the Hitler era brought an end to certain ways of thinking and behaving that had characterized Germany since Roman times. From its former militarism, Germany has moved to an aversion to building armies and buying weapons. From its former authoritarianism it has become one of the most democratic countries in Europe, fostering worker participation in factory management and the universities and operating a vast program of social insurance. Its ancient xenophobia gave way to necessity in the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s, when it invited millions of Yugoslavs, Turks, and Italians to work, and now, in the recession, the government has been deliberate and cautious about urging its "guests" to go home. As to the Jews, it has undertaken a reparations program on a vast scale (unlike East Germany, which has dissociated itself from the debts as well as the crimes of the preceding regime). And in the United Nations, it has consistently and staunchly voted on Israel's side.

But where there is no love and much mistrust, even these deeds are looked on quizzically by most Jews. After the war, the Jews in Germany used the term "white anti-Semitism" to characterize their reception. They were made as uneasy by this phenomenon of favoritism as they had been earlier by anti-Semitism. For them it was the same attitude turned inside out. It meant that they were still being singled out and perceived as Jews first. As one returnee wrote, he would have preferred to pay a fine for running a red light than to have been forgiven it because he was a Jew.

A very special, leftist aspect of this question was explored in a series of articles that appeared in *Die Zeit* in March 1981, provocatively titled "Warum Ich Gehe" ("Why I Am Going"). In these articles Henryk M. Broder, a young radical born in Katowice, Poland, of East European Jewish parents and brought to Germany as a twelve-year-old in 1958, denounced his comrades on the left for their endemic anti-Semitism. It was the old phenomenon, he said, with a new name—anti-Zionism—and now he was giving up on Germany and emigrating to Israel. His uneasiness was not sudden. A few years earlier, in 1979, Broder had brought out a book of biographical essays called *Fremd im Eigenen Land* ("Stranger in One's Country") that made the same point somewhat more broadly. The book, unfortunately, was less than totally convincing because of Broder's very skewed sample: many of the writers were

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intellectuals, politically Left, and used their space more to denounce capitalist, bourgeois Germany than to give us a report from the interior.

But it is not only the leftists who have doubts. There are probably few Jews in Germany today who can live there without a permanent sense of irony about their position. For many it runs even deeper—there is an acute sense of shame that they have remained and prospered in the land of those who killed their kin. It does not grow easier for their children, and it will surely be generations before Germans and Jews can look one another steadily in the eye.

In Poland the situation is incomparably worse. Five thousand Jews remain, as alien as ever and still the target of official anti-Semitism whenever the government is in difficulty. Even Solidarity does not make the ritual socialist obeisance to universality but is totally, unself-consciously, and committedly Roman Catholic. The ancient Jewish communities of the Near East and Africa have been dispersed. Those who have landed in Western Europe or the United States find themselves in an anomalous position, caught between East and West: Arabic in culture and language, Jewish by religion but outside European Jewish traditions, they feel themselves for the first time in the Diaspora.

Israel, in the three decades since independence, has moved resolutely toward creating its own identity. Despite its heterogenous population, despite the pressures of economic hardship, wars, and perpetual tension of a crisis-ridden daily life, the Israelis have made themselves into a nation, complete with national character, and are distinctly impatient with Jews elsewhere who do not embrace their cause. (Inexplicably, one of Israel's prolific humorists, Ephraim Kishon, whose stories and essays lean heavily on the foibles of Israeli character, is also immensely popular in West Germany, where his books are bought as fast as they are published.)

By default, therefore, the American Jewish community faces an awesome responsibility, but under circumstances probably unique in the history of the Diaspora. The nineteenth-century discussion of "the Jewish Question" was predicated on ideas and used a vocabulary that shaped the discussion and implied the answers. What Jews in America today think about are concrete problems, subject to vehement airing in the press, and eliciting immediate action. When, in September 1980, Bailey Smith, president of the Southern Baptists, announced that God does not hear the prayer of the Jew, representatives of the Jewish community quickly—and as publicly as possible—denounced the statement. But they then undertook a yearlong campaign to educate Reverend Smith, talking to him, inviting him to Seders, and even taking him to Israel for a visit. This episode has, perhaps, a slightly comic aspect, but Jewish organizations have been equally quick on legal and social

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questions and, in the pragmatic American way, have acted without raising clouds of ideology.

In the nineteenth century there was no immediate answer to "the Jewish Question" for liberals. For anti-Semites, of course, the answers were always easy, quick, and violent. But for men of goodwill, both Christians and Jews, the received ideas and the habit of centuries impeded a resolution and seemed to bring them into an endless circle of restatement of hopes and wishes. Schematically stated, the argument ran that, in the best of all possible worlds, the "host" country would learn to "tolerate" its Jews, while the Jews agreed to comport themselves decorously so as not to embarrass their hosts and to imitate them in language and culture as far as possible. In exchange, the tolerated Jews were to be given legal and political rights. Social acceptance could not be guaranteed.

With the tragic end of the communities of Central and Eastern Europe, we come to the end of this century-long discussion with its modest Jewish aspirations and the grudging European answer. Modest on the part of the Jews because they asked for so little in the way of plain humanity and were willing to give up so much. Since the end of World War II, the terms of discourse have changed. Not only has the Jewish world been broken open, but the Christian world also will never be the same.

As I traveled from Dubrovnik to Munich, and then across Germany to Berlin, I realized that the line of generations that had fought for Jewish emancipation had now come to an end, and with it, a way of thinking. The roll call of vanished communities and empty synagogues is long. Dubrovnik's Ulica Judiowska (Jews' Street) is no more than a reminder of their earlier existence, like the Judengasse in countless German towns. The ghosts of Dubrovnik will take their hopes and their history to the grave with them, while in Germany a post-Hitler, post-Holocaust generation raises fresh questions about Jewish life. In the United States, newly sensitive and accommodating to a heterogeneous society, American Jews see the world very differently from their nineteenth-century ancestors. For them the "Jewish problem" as such is obsolete. Their debates on how to live a Jewish life in our times have taken the question onto a different ground.

Despite an endemic and irreducible anti-Semitism in this country, it can no longer flourish with the easy social acceptance it once enjoyed. The old staple nationality jokes and racial jokes have been excised from the stock of the stand-up comedian. It is easier to be an "authentic Jew" in the United States now than it has ever been. In this, American Jews are fortunate because America's history as a land of immigrants has prevented the permanent development of a monolithic myth of a single

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people with a single religion and a single history. Indeed, our textbooks today delight in our diversity. But it is more than convenient that our current pride in our pluralism in the United States has developed only after the separating marks of language, custom, and dress have safely disappeared, when the danger of *real* separatism has vanished, and when just the pleasant afterglow of filtered memory remains to warm the heart.

Languages and cultures fade rapidly in the American climate. A few geographically isolated groups have been able to hold onto their languages for as much as a single generation before being drawn into the mainstream. (The Amish, of course, are a cherished exception.) Even where there is a strong political and emotional investment, as among Puerto Rican or Mexican-American immigrants, the overwhelming forces of modern life—literacy, television, mixed employment—have quickly altered the language its speakers are so carefully trying to preserve. The children of Puerto Rican immigrants, visiting family back home, are criticized for their American Spanish, which, in accent, vocabulary, and structure, seems to be pulling away from the speech of their parents. Even with bilingual schools, bilingual social services, bilingual government documents, it is a question of how long Puerto Rican or Mexican Spanish can survive under the onslaught of a seductive culture.

Although Jews were propelled into a look backward by the shock of the camps, they were just ahead of the sudden discovery and celebration of pluralism of the 1950s—a discovery that put an end to the hegemony of the Miss Moons and made the price of Americanization less exorbitant. With all its promise of liberation, old-style Americanization had required some resolute renunciation because it was predicated on a single "American way" that had no room for other languages, other cultures, other ways of being. In the festival of the 1950s, American Jews, for their own tragic reasons, were reviving their past, as were their Polish and Hungarian and Italian neighbors. Indeed, the nostalgia wave, which had such important political consequences in the United States, also engulfed Europe, bringing in its wake such varied phenomena as the revival of Belle Époque hairdos, folk dancing, the reassertion of regional political claims as well as regional cuisine, and fierce struggles over architectural preservation. Even in Russia there was a rush in the secondhand free shops on old samovars and icons.

A society such as that in the United States is a new experience in the history of the Diaspora. Many of the old elements of strangeness and outside enmity that drew Jews together are missing. If they now cultivate the tradition, it is for its own sake. If they live near one another, it is because they choose to. These freedoms are still new enough to be

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freshly experienced and treasured by people of my generation. Just as we shiver too violently at some of the zephyrs that come our way from the Moral Majority with their resolute, evangelical Christianity, we can also rejoice when we think how far we have come on the road of emancipation. We rejoice also that our children and grandchildren need never suffer helplessly a cross word or an ugly act. They have rights and they have recourse—the great guarantee, as Sartre has pointed out, that Jews have always needed to survive: a state based on reason and justice. This, then, is what twentieth-century emancipation looks like.

Can it be that the Wandering Jew is finally at rest, is finally at home in the Diaspora? After so much spilled blood and spilled ink, this resolution has crept up on us and almost taken us by surprise. In a country as vast as the United States—in spirit as well as in size—there is room, it appears, for many ways of being. The differences, which over the centuries have fueled wars, pogroms, and killings on a monumental scale in Europe, have not been without their echoes here. But perhaps for the first time in their history in the Diaspora, Jews in America can live in the confidence that there is a force other than violence for resolving differences.

Such guarantees speak not only to the rational considerations that every Jew must bring to the question of a just society; they also touch a deeper level involving the fundamental teachings of Judaism and its fundamental method. The five books of the Bible, the Torah, which have been the major Jewish preoccupation for two thousand years, are many things—a cosmology, a history, a theology, but, above all, a body of law. The examination and interpretation of this law, which has engaged some of the best Jewish minds since the first dispersion half a millennium before Christ, is inextricable from the way of Jewish life in the Diaspora. In this process, the power of the law, both secular and theological, has developed an almost mystical importance, promising whatever certainty and justice there is to be found in the tangled circumstances of daily life. It is encouraging to think that this confidence in the law, so tenaciously held, has not been misplaced.

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The Moons of Jupiter

John Updike

Callisto, Ganymede, Europa, Io:
these four, their twinkling spied by Galileo
in his new-invented telescope, debunked
the dogma of celestial spheres—great bubbles
of crystal turning one within the other,
our green and pancake Earth the Edenic center,
and like a beehive Purgatory hung below,
and angels scattered all throughout, chiming
and trumpeting across the curved interstices
their glad and constant news. Not so. *E pur*
si muove, Galileo muttered, *sotto*
voce, having recanted to the Pope.

Yet, it moves, the Earth, and unideal
also the Galilean moons; their motion
and fluctuant occlusions pierced Jove's sphere
and let out all the air that Dante breathed
as tier by singing tier he climbed to where
Beatrice awaited, frosting bride
upon the Universe as Wedding Cake.
Not Virgil now but Voyager, cloned gawker
sent spinning through symptotic skies
and wildly televising back celestial news,
guides us to the brink of the bearable.

Callisto is the outermost satellite
and the first our phantom footsteps tread.
Its surface underfoot is ancient ice,

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in this form frozen four billion years ago
and chipped and peppered since into a slurry
of saturated cratering. Pocked, pocked,
and rippled sullenly, this is the terrain
of unforgiven wrongs and hurts preserved—
the unjust parental slap, the sneering note
passed hand to hand in elementary school,
the sexual insult confided between sleek sheets,
the bad review, the lightly administered snub.
All in this cold gloom keep jagged edges fresh
as yesterday and, muddied by some silicon,
the bitter spikes and uneroded rims
of old impact trip and lacerate
our progress; there is no horizon, just
endless evidence of ego's bombardment.

Next, Ganymede, the largest of these moons,
as large as toasted Mercury. Its ice enchants
with ponds where we can skate and peek down through
pale recent crazings to giant swarthy flakes
of mineral mystery; raked blocks like glaciers
must be traversed, and vales of grooves as if cut
by a parallel sliding, implying
tectonic activity, a once-warmed interior.
This is the realm of counterthrust—the persistent
courtship, the job application, the punch
given back to the ribs of the opposing tackle.
A frozen shame attends these ejecta,
and a grim satisfaction we did not go under
meekly, but thrust our nakedness hard
against the skin of the still-fluid world,
leaving what is called here a ghost crater.

"Cue ball of the satellites"—so joked
The National Geographic of Europa.
But landed on the fact, the mind's eye swims

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in something delicious and sombre both—
a merged Pacific and Siberia,
an opalescent deadness veined with beige
and the whole suffused by a flickering rose
tint taken from great, rotating Jupiter,
which as we reach its inner circles looms
as an emperor, demented but enthroned,
the red spot roaring like an anguished eye
amid a turbulence of boiling eyebrows,
a Cyclops in unease. Europa is still
and smooth, so smooth its horizon's glossy limb
betrays an arc of curvature. The meteors here
fell on young flesh and left scars
no deeper than birthmarks; as we walk
our chins are lit from underneath, the index
of reflection, the albedo, is so high.
Around us glares the illusion of success:
social polish, adequate performance,
accreditations, memberships, applause,
and mutual overlookings melt together
to form one vast acceptance that makes us blind.

On Io, volcanoes plume, and sulfur tugged
by diverse gravitations bubbles forth
from a golden crust that caps a molten sea.
The atmosphere smells foul, and pastel snow
whips burningly upon us, amid the cold.
This is our heart, our bowels, ever renewed,
the poisonous churn of basic needs—
the fear of death, the wish to kill, the itch
to plunge and flee, the joy in excrement—
suffering the pull of bodies proximate.
The reptile brain, the mother's breast,
the running sore and appetitive mouth
are all carved here. Kilometers away,
the melancholy puckered caldera

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erupts, and magma, gas, and crystals hurl
upward in a smooth blue column that
umbrellas overhead, some particles
escaping Io's seething gravity.

Straining upward out of ourselves to follow
their flight, we confront the forgotten
witness, Jupiter's thunderous mass,
striped and spotted like a calico
and hogging with its gases an empyrean
in which the Sun is just a pointed star.
So, in a city, as we hurry along
or swiftly ascend to the sixtieth floor,
enormity suddenly dawns and we become
beamwalkers treading a hand's-breadth of steel,
the winds of space shining around us.
Striated by slow-motion tumult
and lowering like a cloud, the planet turns,
vast ball, annihilating *other*,
epitome of ocean, mountain, cityscape
whose mass would crush us were we once
to stop the inward chant, *This is not real.*

✪ JOHN UPDIKE is the author of four volumes of poetry as well as some sixteen volumes of fiction.

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Polish Intellectuals

STANISLAW BARANCZAK

THE UNPRECEDENTED TURN OF EVENTS IN POLAND—beginning with the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981—is usually interpreted as an attempt to crush the independent (and, therefore, extremely threatening to the Communist monopoly of power) Polish unionist movement. Crushing the unions was, quite obviously, the primary target. Yet it would be a mistake not to notice that the military crackdown consisted not only of a ban on Solidarity's activity but also of a ruthless suppression of all independent culture and, more generally, authentic intellectual life in Poland.

A cursory glance at the present state of Polish cultural institutions clearly reveals the true intentions of the generals' action. Now, more than seven months after martial law was imposed, almost all cultural associations are still suspended;* some of them, such as the Association of Polish Journalists and the Independent Union of Students, were dissolved by the regime as a retaliation for their reform-minded activities between August 1980 and December 1981. Polish state-owned radio and television have been completely militarized; they now broadcast only the most primitive propaganda. Purges on the editorial boards of newspapers and magazines have left only the most "loyal" journalists at work. The overwhelming majority of magazines and journals was not being printed anyway, and even today some of them have still not been allowed to reappear. The situation in book publishing, at first glimpse, appears a little bit more ambiguous. In recent months several books by émigré authors have been published, contrary to all expectations. But it is well to remember that each book has to be approved by a military censor, who at any given moment can enforce some more suppressive policy, depending on the instructions he receives. Similarly, film scripts and theater repertoires are heavily controlled; all new production has virtually come to a stop. Schools and universities are administered by military commissars who have the right to fire politically suspect

* This article was written in mid-July 1982.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK is an associate professor of Polish literature at Harvard University.

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teachers or professors; in at least three cases—at Poznań, Lublin, and Warsaw universities—the democratically elected presidents were removed and replaced by appointed ones.

All these forms of suppression have their precedents in some phases of Poland's postwar history, especially in the Stalinist period; and perhaps only their scope and the nakedness of the military government's intentions make them seem shocking. There is, however, one component of the situation that is relatively new. This is that tens of thousands of intellectuals (writers, artists, and university professors), workers, farmers, and union leaders either went through, or are still in, prisons or internment camps. There were mass arrests in the Stalinist era, too, but they used to be, at least formally, based on some specified indictments. Now, everybody, including the luminaries of Polish culture, can be detained in a "preventive" way—that is to say, without any formal accusation—and held for an indefinite period of time in an internment camp.

As I write these words, I am still not sure how many of those interned in December or later were released in the first days of May—according to the official reports, the number is roughly one thousand—and how many were arrested or rearrested in the wake of the latest demonstrations of protest. Neither do I know the exact number of those who chose emigration as the only way to be released from an internment camp; here, according to the reports from Western embassies, only several hundred of the internees considered such an option.† One thing, though, is sure: Polish intellectuals have never before experienced suppression of the scope executed by domestic authorities over this past year; German and Soviet occupations in the first years of the Second World War are the only events that compare with it.

What was the reason for this unprecedented pogrom on Polish culture? Why such relentlessness in the regime's policy toward intellectuals? Is an independently thinking writer or scholar really so dangerous to the interests of a totalitarian state that he should be interned, fired from his job, or forced to emigrate?

Not only can the latter question be applied to Poland, but it is especially relevant in the light of recent Polish events. The last six years have to be seen as a period of growing independence of those Polish institutions representing the cultural and intellectual life of the country. This in itself would have been enough finally to provoke a reaction on the part of the totalitarian regime, which traditionally tolerates no

† On July 22, 1982, Polish military authorities released over 1,200 internees. However, about 600 of the most prominent activists still remain in prisons and internment camps. The latest data concerning the emigration of the former internees say that about 250 of them had arrived in the West after July 22.

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independence whatsoever. However, what was even more intolerable from the regime's point of view was that Polish independent intellectuals were having more and more influence on the whole society's attitudes. I mean here not only their direct influence on the policies of Solidarity after August 1980 but also an earlier and more general phenomenon: the developments that resulted in the growing role of intellectuals in what I would call an unofficial self-education of Polish society.

In order to understand the nature of that process, let us go back further into the past. One can say without any fear of oversimplification that totalitarian regimes, in making social policy, always consciously used the ancient principle of *divide et impera*. In a theoretically classless Socialist state, new class divisions within society are purposely created and artificially deepened. The ideal society, according to the intentions of the Communist rulers, would resemble very much what George Orwell envisaged in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: it would consist of a large mass of uneducated "prolets" and a small group of intellectuals, with the latter reduced to an absolutely indispensable minimum and carefully selected for their total faithfulness to the official ideology. But even if the intellectuals are blindly loyal, the gulf between them and the "prolets" should be as wide and deep as possible; for, as every totalitarian regime knows, the ability to think is a contagious disease.

This was, indeed, the hidden foundation of the social policies of consecutive Polish Communist rulers, from Bierut through Gomulka to Gierek. However, in reality, the Polish people more and more frequently resisted the efforts and wrecked the hopes of the Communist rulers. First, in the age of modern technology, the "prolets" could no longer be thoughtless robots: a modern worker obviously must have a fairly high level of technical education, which in turn requires some intellectual ability. Second, the intellectuals could never fit into the pattern of loyal obedience to the Party's orders; and in the course of Polish postwar history, more and more Polish intellectuals found themselves unable to conform and hence were forced to assume a dissident stance.

Nevertheless, the *divide et impera* policy of the regime has been, to a certain point, successful. It was never so obvious as in the later 1960s, when Polish culture experienced its grimmest defeat yet—the students' and intellectuals' protest of March 1968. This protest erupted after the censors' ban on performances of a Polish Romantic drama, and, sad to report, it did not receive any support from the workers or farmers and was crushed without much effort. Two years later this lack of common interests and mutual understanding between workers and intellectuals found its mirror image in the events of December 1970, when the

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workers' uprising in the Baltic cities—caused by a price increase on food—was insufficiently supported by any action on the part of intellectuals and was crushed with extreme brutality.

The sad experience of those two major defeats helped the dissident Polish intellectuals to draw two far-reaching conclusions. First, the only way to freedom and democracy leads through genuine cooperation of all social strata; and second, the masses must be taught that, in dealing with the forces of the regime, they must avoid both violence, which only results in bloodshed, and conspiracy, which only makes reprisals more plausible, and use only those means of pressure that have a legal justification. The first opportunity to prove the worth of these conclusions came in June 1976, when the police again crushed strikes and demonstrations caused by yet another of the regime's arbitrary food price-increases. This sort of thing had happened many times before, but this time the practical consequences of the defeat opened a new chapter in Polish history. In September 1976, KOR, as the Workers' Defense Committee was known, emerged. This was a group of intellectuals that organized financial, legal, and medical help for persecuted workers and their families, and, at the same time, set up an information network. Despite police harassment and many reprisals, KOR gained wide support, especially among the young, in a very short time. In 1977 the group renamed itself the Committee for Social Self-Defense, since its goals and its actual accomplishments had grown wider to include all possible activities involving the defense of human and civil rights.

In countries like Poland the defense of human rights must begin with making people aware of those rights and of specific cases of their violation. Hence, from its very beginning, KOR was compelled to create an independent network of information that would make cases of persecution known and that would provide instructions on how to behave in the event of persecution. It was impossible, of course, to publish such information in the state-controlled press or mass media. Thus, the whole network—including the technical means of publication—had to be created ex nihilo. The first announcements and bulletins from KOR were simply typed in ten copies and passed from hand to hand; each reader was obliged to make another ten copies and to pass these along to other readers. Amazingly, this simple scheme of circulation succeeded, especially when the bulletins began to reach foreign correspondents whose accounts, translated back into Polish by Radio Free Europe or BBC radio stations, usually boomeranged their way back to the Polish audience. In other words, even if the actual bulletins had few readers, the general public sooner or later managed to get acquainted with their content in one form or another.

It was precisely with those modest, typewritten bulletins that the

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great change began. In a relatively short time, the "unofficial self-education of society" developed on a scale nobody had dreamed of. In the postwar period there was always a great deal of dissatisfaction with official information and state-controlled culture, but there were also psychological barriers—fear of persecution, feelings of isolation, certainty that every act of resistance would be stamped out anyway—that prevented people from actively counterattacking. But now the example of KOR encouraged other independent initiatives, not necessarily connected with the issue of workers' defense, but always sharing with KOR its principle of open, legal, and peaceful activity. In the late 1970s Poland was a scene of an extraordinary multiplicity of events and activities, among them the forming of independent publishing houses, the creation of the Association for Academic Courses (better known as the Flying University), the foundation of the Farmers' Self-Defense Committees, and the first attempts to form independent trade unions in Silesia and along the Baltic Coast.

The summer strikes of 1980, which led to the creation of Solidarity, were thus only a final stage in a long series of less spectacular developments. Today, in retrospect, it is easy to notice that all of the above-mentioned initiatives, seemingly separate, were in fact linked together, sometimes quite astonishingly so. One of the top men in Solidarity, the head of the Warsaw chapter of the union, Zbigniew Bujak, was literally educated in politics and history by the uncensored publications distributed in his factory by KOR supporters, as he himself recalls in a 1981 interview. *Robotnik* (*The Worker*), the most popular uncensored magazine, was not only widely read by workers but also co-edited by them; and its editorial board consisted of several workers and several intellectuals. Usually the first thing the newly created Farmers' Self-Defense Committees did was invite professors from the Flying University to deliver some lectures on Polish history, economy, or political science. Examples like those could be easily multiplied. Even before August 1980 there was an enormous demand for real information, authentic knowledge, and genuine culture—a demand for that self-education of society, which in August brought the wondrous unanimity and decisiveness of the Polish "bloodless revolution."

However, the demand for information and culture on the part of the Polish populace would not alone have been enough. That demand had to be met from the other side by a need for free expression on the part of writers and scholars—a need felt strongly enough for them to risk independent activities that could easily have put them in the most serious jeopardy. Such a need existed in the mid-1970s, and especially after 1976, when it was stronger than ever before. The reason for this was the growing power of censorship: the total control of all media—from

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television to scholarly quarterlies—was more and more often considered to be a threat to the very foundations of intellectual life. Outwitting the censor by the means of allusions and allegories was no longer sufficient or, indeed, possible for Polish writers and intellectuals. For those who cared about truth and integrity, there was only one way left: to bypass censorship completely, to write or to teach on one's own, without any control or interference whatsoever. Hence, so many prominent writers contributed to or acted as editors for the uncensored journals and the publishing houses that, even before August 1980, more than forty magazines and more than one hundred books appeared without being censored. Hence also the unprecedented idea—at least in Communist countries—of the Flying University: a group of outstanding scholars who conducted seminars and lectures on history, economics, literature, etc., in private apartments and without the authorities' approval. All those initiatives were constantly endangered by police harassment. Searches and confiscations were held; fines levied and detentions imposed; and in several cases, lecturers and students of the Flying University were brutally assaulted by police agents. But the combination of the popular demand for knowledge with the intellectuals' need for free expression produced a collective consciousness that seemed—and that continues to seem—indestructible.

This became particularly clear after the creation of Solidarity. Because it is so large and widespread, the union immediately raised the society's educational aspirations to the tenth power, if only in terms of the number of people involved. Moreover, Solidarity gave intellectuals a new feeling of confidence: now it was much safer to be an underground printer or unauthorized lecturer because every form of police harassment could be successfully countered by a protest strike. When a printer working for Solidarity was arrested in November 1980, the strike at a steel mill in Warsaw forced the authorities to release him within a few days. All things considered, the unofficial self-education took on colossal proportions in almost no time. Every factory, every school, every office in the country tried to publish its own newsletter, to found its own library of uncensored publications, to organize its own series of public lectures. History, especially of Polish-Soviet relations, was usually the most popular topic, although lectures on sociology, economics, and literature were also widely attended. The intellectuals, as if they were not busy enough trying to carry through the reform of universities or the new law on censorship, were used as advisers and experts in every matter of public interest. Those who knew how to use a screen-printing machine transmitted that art to hundreds of would-be printers. Those who knew how to write taught the future editors of Solidarity newsletters. Those who knew how politics works counseled the Solidarity

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leaders. There was, I think, no period in Polish history in which the Polish people learned so much in such a short time.

The results of that education cannot be destroyed, even by tanks and machine guns. First of all, people acquired some concrete knowledge of history, of economic laws, of political mechanisms, of the cultural phenomena that had been prohibited before—in short, knowledge that allows them to deal more intelligently with their current experiences. Knowing what they know, they are immune to the lies and falsifications of the regime's official propaganda; they are able to counterpoise them with simple facts and logic. Second, sixteen months of intensive self-education exposed people to various sources and means of uncensored information; after an experience of that kind, they will never forget the importance of freedom of speech in the life of a society. In other words, there is every reason to believe that people will no longer be satisfied with some material improvement in their living standards—which is illusory anyway, but that is another matter—and give up their struggle for spiritual freedom. On the contrary, the opinion that these two values, material and spiritual, are linked together is among the most obvious truisms in the political vocabulary of today's Polish people. And third, what was happening between August and December also had deep sociological consequences. The gulf between workers and intellectuals ceased to exist; the divisions, artificially created by the regime in order to atomize society, are no longer in force. Instead, there is only one division—between those who serve the regime and those who oppose it.

One proof that this is so is the fact that what I called the "unofficial self-education of society" still continues. Now, of course, the risk is much greater: instead of short detention or arrest, an offender against the regime's oppressive rule usually gets several years of imprisonment without any right of appeal. A large part of the technical equipment necessary for publishing was seized or destroyed by the police in their raids on Solidarity's offices. Despite all this, underground publishing and other forms of uncensored activities are still going strong. The latest reports from Poland quote the astonishing number of at least seventeen hundred underground periodicals appearing across the country. One of the sensations of recent months has been the emergence of a clandestine radio station. Poems, short stories, essays, and articles that leak out to the West show convincingly that literary and political thought in Poland is flourishing even in the internment camps. The regime is still not able to pacify the universities. In intellectual or artistic circles there is a systematic boycott of those who publicly support the regime's policy. What is even more significant is that similar boycotts are staged by the public: writers who praise General Jaruzelski find on their doorsteps piles of their own books returned by readers; actors who perform in pro-

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regime shows are eventually booed by theatrical audiences; and in many cities crowds of people choose to go for a walk exactly at the time of the evening news on television.

All this puts Polish intellectuals in a very peculiar position. On the one hand, they enjoy society's trust and respect as never before—people know they owe their recent self-education mostly to the intellectuals and their fertilizing influence. On the other hand, society's expectations about intellectuals has risen. The Polish people who remain undaunted, despite the state of war and the persecutions in their country, have the right to demand from the intellectuals at least the same consistency and integrity that they, the people, have shown. Polish writers, artists, and scholars have many times had to bear the burden of oppression; now they have to bear another burden as well—that of the extremely high standard of moral conduct set by the people who trust them. Perhaps it is the most demanding challenge that Polish intellectuals have ever faced.

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History in an Age of Ideologies

ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO

I WANT TO TAKE A LONG VIEW of one disquieting aspect of present-day historical studies. This aspect can be described with some simplification as skepticism about the value of evidence. Rumors are spreading that historians simply manipulate data in order to make propaganda for the political, social, and religious beliefs they happen to cherish at a given moment and place. There is even a widespread notion that such manipulation is inevitable and healthy. According to this view, historians are, and must be, supporters of ideologies: they must recognize that their own task is to foster their own political, social, and religious beliefs because they do not have, and cannot possibly have, objective criteria for truth. The historians who stick to the belief that there is something like truth for the historian are deceivers and self-deceivers. If the late Lord Acton, who notoriously held the opposite view, turns in his grave at hearing such propositions, so much the worse (or perhaps so much the better) for Lord Acton: he ought to have known.

There is of course a great difference between saying that historians tend to be biased and saying that historians are bound to be biased and would be wise to recognize this fact of life as soon as possible. But the implications of both positions are practically the same: historians are seen as manipulators of the past for their more or less respectable ends. History becomes indistinguishable from ideological propaganda, and historians are classified, like all propagandists, as rhetoricians, though of a special kind. I must say that this revival of the respectability of rhetoric, after a century of determined refusal to have anything to do with it, appears to me to be one of the most comic consequences of the decline of classical education. Having discovered something they had not met before, our new ideologists are quite simply enchanted by rhetoric. One of the consequences of this attitude is that an increasing

✪ ARNALDO MOMIGLIANO, the distinguished historian, is professor emeritus at University College, London; Alexander White Professor at the University of Chicago; and Professore Ordinario in Soprannumero Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa. His latest English book is *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*. The present paper is adapted from his Georges Lurcy Lecture presented at the University of Chicago in May 1982.

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proportion of historical research is made in the form of rhetorical and ideological analysis of past historians, with the purpose of showing that every historian from Herodotus to Leonard Krieger has an axe to grind.

The point of view I should like to bring into the discussion of this thorny situation is itself a historical one. History has a history. Even a superficial examination of the conditions in which historical research has developed may help us to introduce an element of proportion and a criterion of judgment. Reciprocal accusations of bias were as frequent among historians in the past as they are in the present. If today it is the Marxist and the bourgeois historian who accuse each other of bias, similar accusations passed freely in previous centuries between Catholic and Protestant historians, between Whigs and Tories, between supporters of the ancien régime and revolutionaries, and even between those who believed in the existence of the Seven Kings of Rome and those who did not. Nor are we entirely on new ground when we hear from Professor Hayden White that history is a form of rhetoric to be treated according to methods of rhetorical research. As I have already implied, some of us still remember that a problematic relationship between history and rhetoric already existed in the school of Isocrates in the fourth century B.C.: then, as now, the problem for history was to avoid being absorbed by rhetoric, whatever the contacts between the two. Even the doubt about the historian's ability to establish the truth is not new. Absolute skepticism about history was a famous disease in the seventeenth century. Many years ago I happened to notice that the seventeenth-century crisis was overcome, as diseases are normally overcome, by the discovery of a better remedy. The antiquarians of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries produced better evidence against those who doubted the historians' evidence. They turned to coins, inscriptions, and charters when chronicles and histories were distrusted. Ultimately, when the panic was over, the critics found that they had learned that not all the chronicles and histories were to be distrusted. There are methods of checking any kind of historical evidence. Many of the arguments we hear nowadays against history, and attempts to discredit the historians' claim to seek the truth, have been heard before and have been refuted before.

It is, however, not enough to say that these things have happened before. First, skepticism about the objectivity of historical research is far more diffuse and sophisticated today than it was in past centuries. Second, in recent times historical research has been assuming a far greater importance in education and, more generally, in society than it did in previous centuries. It seems to me that there is a relation between these two facts. The present crisis in the credibility of history is connected with the change of the position of history in the nineteenth

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century. We must ask whether history has not overreached itself.

Any debate about history must be conducted with proper recognition of the limitations of history and, therefore, of the use of history. If we take it for granted that history can answer questions about the purpose of life or about the shape of the future—which history cannot answer—we are placing ourselves and history in a false position. Part of the trouble, I fear, is that history has become a subject for teaching in schools and universities only in the last two or three centuries, whereas the existence of history as a subject for research and literary activity goes back at least twenty-five centuries in the most modest calculation. History as an educational subject is young—very young in comparison with philosophy, mathematics, grammar, rhetoric, or theology. History was neither found in the curricula of Greek and Roman schools nor, with some exceptions, within the trivium and quadrivium of the Middle Ages. It is indeed a moot point when history began to be taught in the schools and universities of the West. It may therefore be suspected that the academic teachers of history (which, I repeat, is very old as a subject for research, but rather immature as a subject for teaching) have, in their juvenile inexperience, exaggerated the claims of history and therefore facilitated the task of those who want to exploit history for ideological purposes or who simply dislike the look of history. Even in the nineteenth century, when history was taught everywhere, the best historians were seldom professors of history. The three greatest ancient historians of the nineteenth century were Niebuhr, a high civil servant, Grote, a banker, and Mommsen, a professor of law. I think that I may contribute something specific to the present debate about the nature and purpose of history if I call attention to the elementary, but rather forgotten, fact that, for at least two thousand years, before it became in modern times part of school education, history was written for adult minds.

I wish I could turn to a good history of the teaching of history through the centuries. But if it exists, I do not know of it. Although I know of good partial contributions, none is perhaps better than Friedrich Paulsen's *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts,* which is still as serviceable as it was in 1884, when it was first published. One likes to remember the motto Paulsen derived from Spinoza: "*neque ridere, neque flere, nec detestari, sed intelligere.*" Unfortunately Paulsen never went beyond German schools, and he went only as far back as the Renaissance.

II

What, then, was history in Greece and Rome, if nobody learned it at school? Whatever it was, at least from the end of the sixth century B.C. onward, it was something different from mere registration of events.

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Record keepers of one sort or another are needed in any society, and certainly record keepers displayed sophisticated methods in some of the Eastern societies of the first millennium B.C. But if we leave the biblical historiography of the Hebrews aside for a moment, there is nothing in the East, or indeed in early Greece, comparable with what we meet for the first time in Greece at the end of the sixth century and during the fifth century B.C. Here for the first time there are individuals who, without any apparent external inducement, without public employment (whether sacred or profane), turn to examining events of the past in a critical mood. They either explicitly criticize previously existing stories or undertake to narrate events they themselves are witnessing according to a method they themselves consider new and are prepared to defend against other methods. The first man we know of this kind is Hecataeus of Miletus, who, at the very end of the sixth century B.C., offered a revised and more credible version of what we would call the mythical tradition of the Greeks. He was not afraid of saying in the introduction to his work that the preexisting "accounts of the Greeks were many and ridiculous." After him we have of course Herodotus and Thucydides, who, through their accounts of, respectively, the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars, became the masters of history writing for the Greeks. The Persian war, or wars, happened when Herodotus was a child, but the Peloponnesian war caught Thucydides in his maturity. While Hecataeus had tried to give a critical account of stories that had been circulating for centuries, Herodotus and Thucydides attempted to put order and credibility into their accounts of contemporary or near-contemporary events. In these three individuals, whom we know reasonably well (though Hecataeus's work is preserved only in miserable fragments), we meet a new type of man: the man who examines the recent or the distant past with no other purpose than to get at the truth of it. He knows that if he wants to tell the truth, he has to make a critical effort—that is, he has to elaborate a method for the examination of the evidence. Critical history is born with these men, insofar as critical methods for examining the evidence are formulated by them. We have no reason to think that Hecataeus and Thucydides gained any material profit from their writing. As for Herodotus, the situation is different because we are told that he received the conspicuous sum of ten talents from the Athenians as a reward. I shall not go into the various questions connected with this prize again here. It will be enough to say that if the figure is authentic it was equivalent to the wages of an Athenian worker for 166 years. No Nobel Prize has ever equalled such a record. In any case, Herodotus seems to have made some money with his history. He became the father of history because he proved also that you can make money with Clio. Other historians followed his example. Xenophon was

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given an estate by Sparta; Callisthenes broke new ground by agreeing to follow Alexander as his historian, and ended badly. Hannibal had some Greeks at his headquarters to write about his war. Yet the Greek historians were never transformed into public officials. Many jealously defended their own freedom of speech. If the Roman emperors found willing adulators among some historians, other historians had their books burnt and even their lives taken by angry emperors. Tiberius is the first sovereign known to us to have burned a book of history: his victim was Cremutius Cordus. The ethos of the historical profession that we have inherited is still basically that of individualistic enterprise and of freedom of speech, which was introduced by the Greek historians and imitated by the Roman historians.

The Roman imitation, which was of decisive importance for later generations, is worth emphasizing because originally the Romans had official pontifical registrations of public events—the so-called "annales pontificum"—which might easily have led to a State historiography. In fact, the sturdy senators who disentangled themselves from the pontifical chronicle—people like Fabius Pictor and Cato the Censor—showed every inclination to follow the individualistic example of the Greeks. This meant that the historian was free to choose his own subject, free to decide how much trouble he would take in ascertaining the facts he wanted to tell, and finally, he was free to evaluate his own position in society, in relation both to his potential readers and, where applicable, to his patrons. We know of historians who decided to keep what they had written in their safes and who hoped for posthumous publication in changed circumstances. The ethos of the ancient historian was therefore that of personal responsibility. It comes as no surprise that many opted for trivial and unreliable storytelling. There was no visible barrier between history and romance: both were called *historia*; and there are still languages, such as Italian, where the word *storia* can mean both, whereas modern English makes a rather feeble distinction between *history* and *story*. Mercifully, many of the historians who have come down to us are the most serious that Greco-Roman antiquity has produced. But if we still had the library of Alexandria, we would be shocked by the historical trash we would find in it.

As the historian had no share in the ordinary business of educating the young—and no specific training himself—professionalism was reduced to a minimum. The historian had adult customers to whom he could offer instruction born of experience. Presupposing a certain uniformity in human nature and a certain recurrence of similar circumstances—not unreasonable assumptions—he put his knowledge at the service of those who would buy his books or (a frequent event) who would come to listen to public readings of what he had written. Even

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when he was being unscrupulous and mendacious, he had to claim to be truthful and to take some trouble not to be found out too easily. Thus truthfulness became the mark of the profession even for those who paid only lip service to it. I know of only one serious exception in the whole of antiquity to this individualistic and basically dilettante approach to history writing: this was the systematic research undertaken within the school of Aristotle into political constitutions, biographical types, and the history of ideas. This was the nearest equivalent to a research team. The goal was that of building up a philosophy based on empirical knowledge. But Aristotle had few imitators. And Aristotle did not claim that his historical research could replace philosophical meditation or universal concepts. It never occurred to the historians of the Greco-Roman world—or to their successors in later ages—that they could replace religious teachers, philosophers, moralists—or even astrologers. There was no inherent universality and no inherent necessity in their teaching. Polybius came near to claiming universal validity for his theory of the cycle of constitutions. But he formulated his theory as a philosophic excursus to his historical narrative and, as far as I know, never applied it to his own narrative. In antiquity, historians seldom presumed to tell people what kind of a life they should lead and what they should expect from life.

The exception, if there was one, was with the Jews and consequently with the Christians. They had the Bible, which was both a statement of beliefs and a historical record: the statement and the record were inseparable. Furthermore, unlike other historical books, the Bible was in some measure taught in schools and read in synagogues and churches. However, the consequences of this peculiar attitude of Jews and Christians to what we call sacred history were perhaps not so conspicuous as we should like to think. In the Greco-Roman context and even in the medieval context, the recognition of the authority of the Bible did not change the attitude to history for those who wrote history. I must underline "those who wrote history." For in the second or third century A.D., the Jews stopped writing history altogether for more than a thousand years. This is a problem in itself, but it hardly affected the Christians. When in the fourth century Eusebius created ecclesiastical history, which was biblical history adapted to the new Christian situation, he certainly found disciples and imitators. But after about a hundred years, ecclesiastical history began to lose vitality and to get confused with old-fashioned imperial or local history. Ecclesiastical history as sacred history regained strength only a thousand years later when Western Europe was split by the Reformation. *The Magdeburg Centuries* is, incidentally, one of the first collective historical efforts of modern Europe: it gave some indication of the new importance that

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history was going to assume in the atmosphere of the religious wars and state absolutism of the sixteenth century.

Before the Age of Reformation we find, of course, a great interest in registering the events of individual states, monastic institutions, and ecclesiastical units, but the presuppositions of the Greco-Roman tradition of history remain valid. As before, history hardly affected the general education of the young. It went on helping adults to remember and understand past events, or alternatively, it provided amusement. As the world, or at least Europe, was far less homogeneous in languages and institutions than it had been under the Romans, verification of information became correspondingly more difficult both for the writers and for the readers of history, but historians remained bound by the rule that it was their duty to tell the truth. It also remained self-evident that even the best chronicle of the Crusaders or the best life of a saint could not replace theology or philosophy or moral instruction. If anything definitely changed it was the relation between the individual historian and the social frame within which he worked. Whereas the classical historian tended to stand up as an individual and claim the right to judge his contemporaries, the medieval historian is often the anonymous or semi-anonymous member of a corporation. As such he learned inside his institution how to continue the work of his predecessor. If he imitated an ancient author, we may suspect that he was taught to do so by his local instructor. We like to think that at the end of the tenth century Richer of Rheims was taught by his teacher Gerbert, later Pope Sylvester II, to imitate Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. We do not even need to presuppose a teacher when a century or so later Fulcher of Chartres, the chronicler of the First Crusade, compared his Franks to the "Israelites or Maccabees." Taking men of the past as models for form and substance was a sign of modesty. Historians knew they were marginal. The ultimate meaning of what they told was to be found in the Bible (Apocalypse included) or in Saint Augustine—but that was something different.

III

The great change that slowly turned history into a subject taught in schools and universities, and therefore gave a place to the historians within the educational system, begins with the Renaissance. Part of the difficulty in describing this change is that history writing went on, as before, in institutions like monasteries, bishops' palaces, town halls, and princely courts, where the duty of being a chronicler or historiographer might be subsidiary to other functions. A monk might become a historian but was never enrolled qua historian. Fulcher is known to us as a

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chronicler; he was probably better known and respected by his contemporaries as a priest and a chaplain to Baldwin I. There is some continuity between the Benedictine chroniclers of the Middle Ages and the great *érudits* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who worked for the same order on historical subjects. The dynastic and civic chroniclers of the French courts or of Genoa and Venice paved the way for the civic and royal historiographers of the Renaissance and later. But the mere fact that during the Renaissance an entire class of official historians was paid by the various States, and raised to a position of influence and authority in an unprecedented way, prepared the ground for the establishment of history as an academic subject. We can even isolate a transitional period in which, in the absence of specific chairs of history in the universities, historians were offered traditional chairs in other subjects on the understanding, or indeed with the obligation, that they would use their leisure hours to write suitable history. Men like Paolo Giovio and Carlo Sigonio were given chairs, respectively of philosophy in Rome and of humanities in Bologna, in order to employ them as historians. A more subtle form of enticement of the historians by the princes developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when we see promising historians like Leibniz and Hume (for this is how they were regarded) being established as librarians. Muratori, too, was a librarian. Another of these transitional forms between court patronage and university employment was represented by the academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which gave pensions to some historians, and in some cases even provided for the training of younger historians under the supervision of senior members. According to its Statutes of 1701, the French Académie des Inscriptions—certainly the institution of its kind that contributed most to historical research in the early eighteenth century—included ten *élèves* among the forty *académiciens* devoted to historical studies.

However, the real revolution happened with the introduction of history teaching in the universities. Creation of new chairs for history was slow. As far as I can see, it often took two surreptitious forms. The first was to enlarge the inevitable element of history teaching that was involved in the interpretation of Greek and Latin texts, whether historical or not. In ancient and medieval times, boys had been taught to read some historians as models for literary style; they had also been instructed in the use of historical episodes as ingredients for their rhetorical declamations. Some history—almost unintentionally—had always entered schools by the back doors of grammar and rhetoric. A teacher who could read the *Aeneid* in a class without giving some historical information would be a brave man indeed. In Renaissance schools and universities this element of surreptitious history teaching

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was consciously extended to the point of giving history some autonomy within the humanities. The Jesuitic *ratio studiorum* did not accept in its ultimate formulation the more advanced requests of German Jesuits that history should be given a place of its own in the new system of education. But the *ratio studiorum* recognized the importance of the historical interpretation of Greek and Roman historians within the teaching of the humanities. The Jesuits had been preceded in the Protestant camp by Melanchthon's authoritative example. Wherever we meet Melanchthon's influence, whether at Wittenberg, at Marburg, or at Heidelberg, some sort of history teaching emerges from the explanation of ancient historians. About 1560 at Wittenberg there was even a lecture on history at 9:00 A.M. on Saturdays. About the same year, a pupil of Melanchthon, David Chytraeus, lectured on Herodotus and Thucydides. As we know something of the contents of these lectures, we can see that Herodotus was compared with the Bible and Thucydides was used to throw light on the contemporary scene. These are just examples, and we may add that the Camden praelector of history created at Oxford in 1622—the first specific chair of ancient history—had the statutory duty of commenting on Florus and other ancient historians.

Where by provisional exploration or casual information I have been able to follow up the creation of chairs of history, it seems that the combination of history with another subject—law, eloquence, or Greek and Latin languages—was the most common and effective way of introducing history. I shall choose as an example one of the universities that is dearest to my heart, the University of Leiden. There, four years after the foundation of the university, Justus Lipsius was made a *professor historiae et iuris* in 1579. After his notorious flight, his chair was offered to Scaliger as a professorship in Roman history and antiquities; ultimately, as we all know, Scaliger had no precise academic duties. In 1622 Gerhard Johannes Vossius held the chair with the title of *professor historiarum et eloquentiae*. In 1693 Perizonius, the writer on Roman history whom Niebuhr considered his sole predecessor, was *professor eloquentiae, Graecae linguae et historiarum*, and we know that he taught modern history as well. At the end of the eighteenth century, D. Wyttenbach associated, as a matter of course, "universal history, Roman antiquities and the interpretation of a Latin author" with the same Leiden chair. To choose two other less elaborate examples: in the second part of the seventeenth century, Christopher Cellarius, who is credited with the academic separation of medieval and modern history, was in fact teaching ancient and modern history as a professor of eloquence at Halle; at the Collège de France, history makes its first appearance in 1775 in a joint chair of "histoire et morale." It is worth remembering that this was still the title of Michelet's chair at the

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Collège de France in 1838. I am not sorry for Michelet, but I am sorry for his predecessor, Letronne, the founder of the modern study of Greek epigraphy, who had to carry this inconvenient title until he was given a more appropriate chair in 1838. As for chairs exclusively devoted to modern history, it will be enough to remind ourselves that the regius chair of modern history at Oxford was created in 1724. Cambridge had had a generic lectureship of history since 1627. The first incumbent was soon thrown out, and successors were difficult to find. Edinburgh got its professorship of civil history in 1719, a few years after having received a chair of ecclesiastical history. Yale is credited with having created the first chair of history in America in 1778; Harvard had one, as far as I know, only in 1839. If I have not yet produced any date for the chairs of history in Italian universities, it is because I am not sure that any chair of history was created in Italy before the eighteenth century. In 1743 the Benedictine Vito Mario Amico was appointed a professor of civil history at Catania University (and subsequently promoted to Royal Historiographer). In 1784 Aurelio Bertola, a literary critic of considerable originality, was made a professor of universal history at Pavia. At least in the first half of the eighteenth century there was no chair of history at Padua. In my alma mater, Turin, which was founded in 1405, the first professor of modern history was Ercole Ricotti in 1847, and the first professor of ancient history was my teacher and immediate predecessor Gaetano De Sanctis. Whatever the details of the slow development of the study of history in the universities, it is certain that the first model of an organized academic study of history with a coherent purpose was provided in the second part of the eighteenth century by the new foundation of Göttingen, the Georgia Augusta University. There, in an atmosphere of mediation between German and English political institutions and the liberal arts, a few scholars elaborated the notions and methods of a study of history (what they liked to call universal history) that became generally accepted in the nineteenth century. Though the Georgia Augusta University was proud of drawing many of its students from the aristocracies of England, Russia, and, of course, the entire Holy Roman Empire (and there were students from France and Italy), political history and public law and administration were not the only specialities for which the place was famous and from which the future ruling class derived its instruction. Cultural history, history of religion and mythology, literature, and, above all, economic history and statistics received at least some of their modern foundations at Göttingen. There J. C. Gatterer elaborated the notion of the auxiliary sciences (heraldry, genealogy, diplomatics, historical geography) and gave a general example of how to plan historical research in the essay *Vom historischen Plan* with which he opened the *Allgemeine Historische Bibliothek* in

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1767. It was at Göttingen that Wilhelm von Humboldt began to mature the ideas that were to lead to the foundation of the University of Berlin, and it is the Göttingen professor A. H. L. Heeren who is credited with having laid the foundations of the historical education of Bismarck, though he personally believed in a balance of powers between small states. Technical improvements followed elsewhere: the École des Chartes for the study of documents was opened in Paris in 1824, not far from St.-Germain-des-Prés, where about one hundred fifty years earlier Mabillon had written the first modern book on diplomatics; the model Institut für Geschichtsforschung was founded by Theodor von Sickel in Vienna in 1854. But the sort of educational establishment for learning and for doing history, which was first introduced into the United States, I believe, by the Johns Hopkins University with Herbert Baxter Adams and then by the University of Chicago, is still, in its basic features, a reproduction of the Göttingen model. It is directed toward training students to do competent research, but at the same time it assumes potentially unlimited interest in the past of any country. It aims at providing a reliable notion of the development of civilization. The Göttingen professors, as Benjamin Constant noticed with horrified admiration, worked from 5:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. This is what we are still supposed to do, except that the cycle is rather from 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. There are other assumptions in this model: the first is that the university guarantees freedom of research and teaching to the teachers it hires after having satisfied itself that the teachers have the necessary qualifications.

I do not see anything very wrong in these assumptions. In fact, it would be desirable that certain features of the Göttingen model should be taken more seriously. Most universities still teach history of literature, history of science, history of law, and history of religion without connection with general history. But I see some dangers, which are not merely theoretical, in the responsibility that historians have acquired by becoming, for the first time in history, educators of the young. In the past the historian educated incidentally. He tried to explain to adult minds how specific situations came about and how people acted in them. He knew he spoke to people who derived their convictions and their criteria for acting from well-rooted religious and philosophic beliefs—or at least from well-rooted prejudice. The historian himself, whatever he might say in some unguarded moment, did not claim to have explored the mysteries of human life and to be able to replace the answers of theology, philosophy, or the natural sciences. As he spoke to mature people, he had to provide evidence for what he said. He knew that he would lose all authority if he were discovered to be telling lies. Truth, as I am not tired of repeating, was his motto.

It would be ridiculous to say that historians have lost the sense of

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their limits and of their responsibilities by becoming teachers. In fact, one of the most reassuring features of the development of historical research in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is the invention of numerous new devices for checking facts and discovering lies and falsifications. Good dictionaries, for instance, are splendid lie detectors. But teaching has often increased the temptation of offering conclusions without due support from the evidence. It has also created what seems to me an imbalance between interpretation of facts and discovery of facts. In our university teaching, perhaps inevitably, the interpretation of old facts is more frequent than the discovery of new facts. But only the discovery of new facts keeps alive the sense that history depends on evidence; and the discovery of new evidence is a perpetual challenge to received conclusions. True historians, it is unnecessary to add, rejoice in the discovery of new evidence, even if it contradicts some of their cherished convictions.

All this, however, is less important than an additional circumstance. The decline in the respect for and interest in evidence could be easily kept under control by the corresponding increase and refinement in methods for checking the evidence, except for another factor that, though not the historian's doing, impinges on his situation as a teacher. Ordinary religious, philosophic, and moral tenets have been losing authority. It has therefore become customary to ask the historian to provide guidance for the future development of mankind. It has also become common to ask the historian to provide quasi-religious or quasi-moral interpretations of the past that are quite beyond the abilities of any historian qua historian. As soon as you begin to ask the historian to do what he cannot do, you will involve him in the sort of trouble we are just now noticing. In the ensuing confusion it would be easy to claim that the historian's task is not to give objective information about the past but to provide a message for the future. This is exactly the position preferred by those who define history as a branch of rhetoric and deny the historian's ability to discover the past, yet expect from him a blueprint for the future. Let us be in no doubt about the fundamental point. The historian works on evidence. Rhetoric is not his business. The historian has to assume ordinary commonsense criteria for judging his own evidence. He must not allow himself to be persuaded that his criteria of truth are relative and that what is true for him today will no longer be true for him tomorrow.

The study of history is founded upon the assumption that man is capable of examining his own past, and is entitled to do so, on the basis of evidence. After all, any ordinary man does that ten times a day for a more limited and personal past. On the other hand, the prudent historian will not delude himself that history can replace religion or philosophy or

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simple morality in indicating what man must do. Beware of the historian-prophet. Historical research has quite enough to do to establish and explain how certain situations of the past developed. The choice of the situations that need to be clarified cannot be determined a priori: it will depend on the situation in which we live and on the difficulties that we have to solve. The choice of the subjects for research and teaching is naturally personal and subjective and may well depend on whatever is left of our religious or philosophical or moral convictions. What matters is that once the research or the teaching starts, we must be guided by the evidence we are given or are able to discover. The motives for starting a piece of research must not affect the conduct of the research itself. In their turn, the results of the research will have to be examined by whatever is left of our religious, philosophical, or moral convictions before we make our historical conclusions the starting point of any action. Knowledge of the past is a useful, but not a sufficient, condition for action. Unless we bear in mind that history as such informs us about the past of mankind but does not provide the criteria for action in the future, we shall find ourselves less informed about the past and less capable of deciding responsibly about the future. What I ultimately want to suggest is that history must remain, even in times of mass education, what it was when it was written for a limited number of adult readers—namely, information about our past.

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Late Beethoven

SANDRA M. GILBERT

I

Beethoven dozes in a stone courtyard,
solemn head tipped backward, closed eyes
gazing at granite:

behind his lids
minuets of death tiptoe past
without shapes, without dancers.

The sweetness of that desolation!
Iced feathers, damp ferns
in a slow wind, quartz pebbles

falling one by one
into the black pond at the far
end of the meadow . . .

II

It's midnight when we come to
the stone house in the pine forest.
Your key enters the lock like a word
that brings meaning to a blind sentence.

No electricity. No moon.
You click your flashlight on

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and walk three times around the room,
splashing light across locked cupboards.

Yes, there's Beethoven
asleep on a couch against the wall.
His snores and wishes fill the air
like the breathless drone of a fan

or like the white breath of water
hurrying over cold stones.

III

For a moment Beethoven
is half or more than half

in love with death: he dreams
this is the song that hums in the veins of the cold,

if you split the skin of ice
you find these streams of sound.

Then he turns, sighs, remembers the owl
that nests in the stone chimney,

its note the true
question of astonishment,

the question that broods on silence
inside the music.

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IV

I ask you to meet me outside the house
in that clearing where the birches
circle like ceremonial candles.

You say no, you won't, you
can't be there. At dawn
I go anyway.

Beethoven's waiting,
he's waited all night, his enormous
thicket of hair is wet.

But he smiles. Wide-awake, leaning
against a white-faced tree,
smiles and recites

the single
diminished seventh
of his own death.

✪ SANDRA M. GILBERT is, with Susan Gubar, the author of *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* and co-editor of *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*. A collection of her poems, *In the Fourth World*, was published in 1979.

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In Another Country

GAVIN EWART

Our bodies have changed
and are no longer the same
as those that had connection
a quarter century ago;

the scar by the nipple
where the cancer was excised,
the blotch where radiation
burned sore the tender skin;

the womb quite removed;
and a gray white streak
badgers your forehead—
though you still sing in tune.

I too am altering;
fatness and falling hair,
gray at the temples;
wartlike excrescences

appear on my back,
on my arms and legs;
grave-marks on hands.
I'm more like an old frog

than I ever used to be,
twinged by arthritis,

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gout warnings in toes.
I have more in common

with our vintage cat
than with the children.
All this is not amazing
in a life where old poets

retire into envy
and drink themselves to death
among their admirers
in out-of-the-way places.

Aging is a faintness
like a line in Shakespeare:
old, old, old, old.
Say it over and over.

GAVIN EWART is the well-known British poet whose most recent publication is *The Collected Ewart, 1933–1980.*

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MUSIC

Pshaw!

SAMUEL LIPMAN

For George Bernard Shaw, in the beginning was the word, and the word was always with him. Indeed, for an admiring public, he was the very word incarnate his whole life long. Whenever and wherever he wrote, a veritable Niagara of rhetoric engulfed friend and foe alike. By turns prophet and diabolist, moralist and cynic, leader and disciple, radical and commonsense liberal, he saw himself as the conscience of literate mankind; all that is certain is that he was a one-man Public Broadcasting Service, telling the educated in a piquant way what they most wanted to know.

Chief among the fields where Shaw cast his glittering pearls was, of course, the theater. Here, of his numerous plays, a large number still hold the stage in productions pleasing both to the box office and to the self-esteem of the participants. *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *Man and Superman* (1901–03), *Major Barbara* (1905), and *Saint Joan* (1923); all these helped set the intellectual tone of the Anglo-American stage for the better part of the past hundred years. In *Pygmalion* (1912), his greatest long-run success, he provided the framework for what later became, in *My Fair Lady* (1956), a musical fairy tale speaking directly to the new class of social adepts who run—and run down—our society.

And then, just around the corner (in both our past and our present), there are Shaw's politics. His was the silver tongue of Fabian socialism; by mixing advocacy of left-wing programs with a prosperous literary career, he became perhaps our most visible public combiner of high ideals and high income. He spoke in the most deliciously individual way in behalf of social planning. He used the freedoms of an Englishman to plump for the slavery of Russians. Even more, while fighting tooth and claw for every penny of royalties, he campaigned fearlessly for the redistribution of income on a basis of simple equality.

His social positions were no less marked by the kind of contradictions so easily available to the holder of truly simple views. He was a vegetarian and anti-vivisectionist, whose life was saved from pernicious anemia by liver injections. He spoke enthusiastically for submission to the life-force, while he himself engaged in an unconsummated marriage lasting close to half a century. He more or less supported Home Rule, but cordially despised his fellow Irish; he campaigned tirelessly for the workingman, but he gladly spent his time with Lady Astor.

The foundations of Shaw's public prominence, oddly enough, were laid neither by his political nor by his social writings. Still less was the beginning of his rise to fame a result of his plays, which were not commercially successful until after the turn of the century. Shaw's early career was instead the fruit of his writing years and yards of criticism, at first of music and then, for a shorter period in the 1890s, of the theater.

The involvement of Shaw with music stretched over his whole life. Born in Ireland in 1856 to Protestant parents, he learned music from his mother, a singer. Together with her vocal teacher (one of those mixed genius-charlatans so common even today in that profession) she was responsible, according to Shaw's later testimony, for inspiring his knowledge about musical art. His father, moreover, was a fairly advanced trombone player, though here the evidence seems

SAMUEL LIPMAN is a pianist and the music critic for *Commentary*. A member of the artist faculties of the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado and the Waterloo Music Festival in New Jersey, he is the author of *Music After Modernism* and the forthcoming *The House of Music*. He is also the publisher of the *New Criterion*.

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clouded by the peculiar combination of distaste and flippancy with which Shaw habitually treated the memories of his father and of his own childhood.

In any case—and again, as almost always with the early Shaw, by his own account—at the end of his schooling, still only in his mid-teens, he "could sing and whistle from end to end leading works by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi." But all this was by ear; at the age of fifteen he was not yet able to "play [or] read a note of music." Ever resourceful in self-improvement, he was forced to teach himself the piano "from a book with a diagram of the keyboard."

Now living in London, Shaw began his musical explorations by trying to play, from the notes, a piece that he already knew in sound. This piece was the Overture to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In Shaw's case, as in countless others, this first musical experience of choice became his preferred sound for a lifetime. Here, in the fumblings of a bright boy thrown on his own by the breakup of his family circle, was determined the basis for the adult Shaw's idolizing of Mozart and his *Don*; that Shaw's only other comparable musical dedication was to the quintessentially un-Mozartlike Richard Wagner only shows how in music, as elsewhere, GBS raised paradox—not to mention antinomy—to the level of a fine art.

Shaw seems to have learned his piano skills well enough to have served as a scratch accompanist for various semiprofessional activities; more to the point, given the economic plight he and his relatives found themselves in, his musical knowledge provided a chance to earn some much needed money by ghosting concert and opera reviews for his mother's old singing teacher. These articles, their authorship undiscovered, were written for almost a year during 1876 and 1877. Aptly enough, considering the sting in Shaw's style, the publication for which he wrote was named the *Hornet*. Unfortunately, we don't seem to know just why the budding journalist ceased his appearances in these pages.

For the next eleven years Shaw wrote intermittently, though not infrequently, about music. He did mostly unsigned pieces for numerous publications, among them the *Saturday Musical Review*, the *Court Journal*, the *Musical Review*, the *Dramatic Review*, *Our Corner*, the *Magazine of Music*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

It was, however, his connection in 1888 with the *Star*, a newly founded London evening newspaper favorable to Gladstone and Home Rule, that finally landed Shaw firmly on the English literary and musical scene. Through the intervention of the radical journalist H. W. Massingham, he had been hired as an editorial writer. But the paper's reformist position hardly extended publicly so far as Shaw's Fabian socialist views, and what he wrote on politics was anathema both to the paper's good-natured editor and also to John Morley, the literary patron saint of late Victorian liberalism. So Shaw moved over to music, first writing for the *Star* as a second-string critic, and then finally, in February of 1889, under the pawky pseudonym of Corno di Bassetto as the lead critic.

GBS wrote for the *Star* until May of 1890, at the bounteous average of sixty-five hundred words each month. However, he wanted more money for his work than the *Star* was willing to pay. He therefore left daily reviewing for a weekly column in the *World*, a journal in which he had earlier, at the recommendation of the dramatic critic and Ibsenite William Archer, written art reviews. For the *World* Shaw wrote, under his own name, the bulk of his music criticism. This production was indeed sizable; lasting until 1894, it filled three volumes in the Standard Edition of Shaw's works, and amounted to more than 350,000 words.

His leaving the *World*, at least partially because of a negative review that his employers refused to print, marked the end of his regular work as a music critic. Though his major attentions were now to be claimed by the theater—he began a three-year stint as dramatic critic for the *Saturday Review* in 1895, and his eventually successful string of plays had begun in 1894 with *Arms and the Man* and *Candida*—he found time to write *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), his famous Marxist-cum-Fabian interpretation of the *Ring des Nibelungen*. This fitting climax to his decade-long concern with Wagner and Bayreuth was followed by a half century of scattered musical comments and controversies (including an enthusiastic 1910 defense of Strauss's *Elektra*, which Shaw had not yet

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heard, against the strictures of the then rising critic Ernest Newman). Almost to the end of his life, Shaw continued to play over operas on the piano and to sing along as he played. His last written words on music, published only a few days after his death in 1950, returned to his favorite subject of singing: in a characteristic swipe at the past, his final article was titled "We Sing Better Than Our Grandparents!"

The literary product of Shaw's seventy-five-year involvement with music criticism has now been collected in three small but fat volumes entitled *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism*. Most of the material in this new edition has, in fact, appeared previously. Mention has already been made of the three volumes of the standard edition covering the 1890–94 writings in the *World*; this collection, which came out in 1932, was supplemented in 1937 by another volume collecting just about all of Shaw's writings for the *Star* and a small amount of later material as well. *The Perfect Wagnerite*, of course, has from its first publication led an uninterrupted existence; it has appeared in numerous editions, including a large printing for distribution along with a special pressing of the Solti recording of the *Ring*.

A generous selection of the previously uncollected early writings for the *Hornet*, material from the period between Shaw's work for the *Hornet* and the *Star*, along with pieces from his post-music-critic days, appeared in 1961 in boards and in 1967 in paperback; this collection, called *How to Become a Musical Critic*, was edited by Dan H. Laurence, who also edited these newly issued three volumes. The 1961 publication carried an introduction by Mr. Laurence, which now appears, in a revised form, in this complete edition. Previously uncollected material, now being republished for the first time, is thus limited to not much more than 160,000 words, something less than one-fifth the contents of this new (and very expensive) set.

Viewed in its entirety, Shaw's music criticism makes clear not only the outlines of his own musical taste and critical approach but also the richness of concert life in London during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Opera in London then, as in New York today, was king. The earlier works of Verdi were already staples of operatic commerce, and French operas were popular as well. Wagner's work, still called the music of the future, was rapidly becoming the music of the present. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was drawing full houses. Still to come was Puccini, whose *Manon Lescaut* was not heard by Shaw until 1894.

With opera, it goes without saying, came singers. Though most of those about whom Shaw wrote are now forgotten, he heard enough great vocalists to suggest the kind of golden age about which graybeards babble. The work of several of these singers has been preserved by the phonograph; chief among these are Calvé, Eames, Maurel, Nordica, Patti, Plançon, and Tamagno; the last named, whose singing Shaw described as "magnificent screaming," created the title role in Verdi's *Othello* in 1887, and has left us a 1903 recording of the opening "Esultate," which is at once stentorian and frighteningly heroic.

Among non-operatic composers widely presented to the London audience during this period, we find Bach, then on the way to his present sainthood; the great choral works, including the *Saint Matthew Passion*, were increasingly being performed by the giant choruses in the large halls so dear to Victorian England. The era of Mendelssohn as musician *sans peur et sans reproche* was drawing to an end, though he still was the hero of a large public. Beethoven's reputation was triumphant, produced not only by the symphonies about which George Grove rhapsodized, but also by performances of music as massive as the *Missa Solemnis* and as recondite as the *Drei Equalen* (*WoO* 30) for four trombones. There was a great deal of chamber music being played, from Haydn and Mozart through Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. In lighter music, the waltzes of the Strauss family were in vogue; on one occasion, a concert of these works produced such a large crowd that the police had to be called out.

Still new to London audiences—because they were freshly being written—were the later staples of such composers as Brahms, Dvořák, and Tchaikovsky. Some of these works were immediately successful. Such a difficult composition as the German Requiem (1868) of Brahms seems to have attracted a following that demanded repeated performances. Tchaikovsky himself conducted his orchestra music in London and Grieg, too,

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performed here with his singer wife.

Nor was English music being ignored. Handel's *Messiah* was then, as always, a national epic; Purcell, too, was performed. Contemporary native music was given an always respectful hearing. Sir Arthur Sullivan was seen as more than a mere partner of Gilbert, and such now forgotten names as Sir Charles Villiers Stanford and Sir Charles Hubert H. Parry occupied concert programs along with the mightiest of Continental masters.

There were notable performers in this period, too, some of them coming to England to perform their own works or those with which they had been closely associated; others belonged to the then, as always, fashionable breed of virtuosi. Shaw heard Wagner conduct during his 1877 visit to London, and he heard Clara Schumann, as well, in one of her appearances as the musical voice from her husband's grave. Joseph Joachim, performing with Clara Schumann and by himself, personally brought the gospel of Brahms to English shores. The pianists (and composers) Albeniz and Paderewski performed their own music and that of others, as did the mythic violinists Sarasate and Ysaÿe.

The conducting scene in London was not quite so star-studded. Among the English conductors then active, perhaps the only directorial career we might remember today was that of Sir George Henschel, the singer turned maestro, Henschel was the first conductor of the Boston Symphony and conducted that orchestra's premiere performance in 1881; a charming souvenir of his gentle musical approach can still be heard in a 1926 recording of the Beethoven First Symphony with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Not surprisingly, the great luminary of the baton in England at this time was the German Hans Richter. Richter, wrapped in the mantle of Wagner, occupied a position in musical life then perhaps comparable to that of Toscanini in New York during the 1930s and the 1940s. Given the absence of orchestral recordings before the second decade of the present century, it is difficult to know how well London orchestras played before 1900; the fact that they seem to have been able to prepare difficult new music with a minimum of rehearsal time suggests a high level of competence—if not of inspiration.

English musical education during this period was in a state of rapid expansion. George Grove's founding of the Royal College of Music in 1882 (the College was opened by the Prince of Wales the next year in a ceremony attended by Gladstone), along with his editing of the famous *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which now bears his name, and the earlier concerts he managed at the Crystal Palace were to a large extent the necessary groundwork for today's remarkably large and remarkably sophisticated English concert audience.

Into this lively musical world stepped spritely (as Shaw said about Max Beerbohm) the incomparable GBS. His was a new voice, speaking with unbounded authority and equally unbounded audacity. No subjects—the mechanics of singing or the niceties of concert pitch and temperament among them—were too abstruse or too technical for the laws this polycritic was always ready to lay down. But music in detail was hardly Shaw's real strength. He was not, on the most tolerant of assessments, a trained musician. It hardly mattered; there were, after all, established music critics entrenched in English concert life who knew all about music. Shaw knew something much more valuable: he knew what he liked.

In composers this meant primarily, though not totally, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner. Mozart, for Shaw, meant *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*. Beethoven meant the Ninth Symphony, and Wagner the *Ring*. In *Don Giovanni*, Shaw found a compelling formulation of his own view of morality, a view that was later to inform *Man and Superman*. In *The Magic Flute* and the Beethoven Ninth Shaw found his true church. And Wagner's *Ring* was Shaw's politics set to myth, a Marxism for non-Marxists, a Darwinism for music lovers, a jungle story for humanitarians.

It will not have escaped the reader that all these masterpieces were in fact program, rather than absolute, music. Not only did Shaw wage an often vitriolic campaign throughout his career as a music critic against the writing of sonatas and fugues, which he considered the very epitome of old-fashioned irrelevance. Not only did he make clear, furthermore, that program music was what really caught his ear and that of the audience. But he also went so far as a partisan of ideas in tone that one comes away with the impression that

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what counted for Shaw in program music was not the music, but the program.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, the only part of Shaw's writings on music capable of surviving outside the hospitality of a collected edition. Here, amidst the usual Shavian self-reference and self-proclamation, he discusses the characters and the meaning of *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and the first two acts of *Siegfried*. Shaw's treatment is marked not only by length but also by enthusiasm, with full credit given to Wagner for creating a supreme artwork. But when Shaw comes to the last act of *Siegfried* and to the whole of *Götterdämmerung*, he turns sour, making clear that here Wagner has lost his claim to artistic revolution and descended to mere opera. So deep is Shaw's commitment to Wagner's program, rather than to his music, that he seems unable to accept the implications of the fact that the greatest music in the *Ring* comes only when Wagner, from Act III of *Siegfried* on, puts down his program. Wagner's triumph as a composer through surrender to purely musical impulses strikes Shaw as a sellout, something that might be expected of a musician, but is unworthy of an artist.

Despite these strictures (Shaw even came to the conclusion during the 1890s that some of the composer's musical material had become second-rate) Wagner was very much at the apex of GBS's musical pyramid. In this reading of musical history Wagner was the perfection of Beethoven, as Mozart had earlier been of Haydn. Mozart, indeed, as holy as Shaw found him, would have turned out just as well had he used the formal resources of Liszt to clothe his genius.

To his loves, Shaw opposed his hates. Chief among these was Brahms, whose German Requiem was to Shaw a special bête noire. Time and again he returned to the attack of a work he found "dreary," "desperately old-fashioned, and empty." He could even be witty at the work's expense:

> Mind, I do not deny that the Requiem is a solid piece of music manufacture. You feel at once that could only have come from the establishment of a first-class undertaker.

It was not only this work of Brahms that aroused Shaw's scorn. Of the Fourth Symphony, for example, Shaw wrote:

> Brahms takes an essentially commonplace theme; gives it a strange air by dressing it in the most elaborate and farfetched harmonies; keeps his countenance severely (which at once convinces an English audience that he must have a great deal in him). . . . Strip off the euphemism from these symphonies, and you will find a string of incomplete dance and ballad tunes, following one another with no more organic coherence than the succession of passing images reflected in a shop window in Piccadilly during any twenty minutes in the day.

What Shaw felt about the Requiem and the Fourth Symphony was also the case with the other symphonies, the Handel Variations, and at least one of the piano concertos, described as "a desperate hash of bits and scraps, with plenty of thickening in the pianoforte part." With Brahms's chamber music, Shaw relented, finding that here indeed were many lovely, if minor, things.

Mendelssohn, too, was in Shaw's disfavor. Though he admired this composer's "exquisite prettiness" (comparing him to Gounod!), he found the massive oratorio *Elijah* "thoughtless . . . not really religious music at all." After hearing a performance of the Beethoven Ninth, he wrote about how he had to turn down an opportunity to hear the Mendelssohn work: "As to following [the Beethoven Symphony] by going to the Albert Hall on Wednesday to hear *Elijah*, I would rather have died."

The larger works of Schubert also disturbed Shaw, though he granted him a "wonderful . . . musical endowment" as well as "manifold charms and winningnesses." Still, for Shaw, Schubert had only "second-rate brains"; of the great C major symphony, Shaw wrote: "A more exasperatingly brainless composition was never put on paper." Nor did Schumann fare well under Shaw's pen. Of a Schumann symphony (like the Brahms concerto castigated above, otherwise unidentified), Shaw said:

> I cannot understand why we take Schumann and ourselves seriously over a work the last half of which is so forced and bungled as to be almost intolerable. I wish someone would extract all the noble passages from Schumann's symphonies, and combine them into a single instrumental fantasia—Reminiscences of Schumann as the military bandmasters would call it—so that we might enjoy them without the drudgery of listening to their elaboration into heavy separate works in which, during

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three-quarters of the performance, there is nothing to admire except the composer's devoted perseverance, which you wish he had not exercised. We all have a deep regard for Schumann; but it is really not in human nature to refrain from occasionally making it clear that he was greater as a musical enthusiast than as a constructive musician. If he had only had Rossini's genius, or Rossini his conscience, what a composer we should have had!

He also thought little of Liszt, and he was dismissive of Tchaikovsky—his music as well as his conducting. Of the famous Bruch G minor Violin Concerto, Shaw thought that a performance of it could "hardly ever have sounded more hopelessly third-class [it had followed a performance of the Overture to *Don Giovanni*], notwithstanding the dignity given to the slow movement by Dr. Joachim's very finest tone." Even Beethoven himself was not totally immune from Shaw's displeasure: early in his critical career, Shaw described the hallowed thirty-two Variations in C minor for piano as "a work which presents some technical difficulties . . . but which is by no means a worthy example of the master's resources in the variation form."

Some of Shaw's lesser loves were no less idiosyncratic than his dislikes. He had a youthful good word to say for William Sterndale Bennett, the English clone of Mendelssohn; he liked some of the music of the now forgotten Joseph Rheinberger (1839–1901). Indeed, Shaw was particularly enthusiastic about the works of the very minor German romantic Hermann Goetz (1840–1876). He thought Goetz's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1868–1872) "the greatest comic opera of the century, except *Die Meistersinger*," an evaluation that hardly seemed to take into account Rossini's *Barber of Seville* (1816). Of the Goetz Symphony in F major, Shaw wrote:

> It is the only real symphony that has been composed since Beethoven died. Beside it Mendelssohn's Scotch Symphony is no symphony at all, but only an enchanting *suite de pièces*; Schubert's symphonies seem mere debauches of exquisitely musical thoughtlessness. . . . Brahms, who alone touches him in mere brute musical faculty, is a dolt in comparison to him.

In performance, Shaw went, as all music critics eventually seem to go, for the big guns. He could make distinctions among the famous; he preferred, for example, the playing of the older Sarasate to that of the younger Ysaÿe. He admired English orchestras and German conductors, and he was quick to deride such celebrities as Patti and Paderewski for giving in to their more vulgar and crowd-pleasing instincts. He wrote endlessly, in the best fashion of English critics, about opera productions, showing in this area the true instinct of a stagestruck fan. On the whole, despite his instinct for debunking the mighty, he always had something of a sweet tooth for powerful performing personalities.

Considering all the words he wrote about the stars, it seems unfortunate that he was frequently so offhand in discussing the real immortals who crossed his journalistic path. The greatest of these was, doubtless, Wagner, whose conducting in 1877 Shaw passes by as "unsatisfactory to an orchestra unused to his peculiarities" and "capriciously hurried or retarded" in tempo. And he is brief, too, though complimentary, in his account of Clara Schumann's playing. He was also negative about the conducting of Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss, two directors whose work has proven, in quite different ways, to be models for their successors.

Shaw did have an eye for new trends. He was interested in the performance of older music on original instruments. He reviewed a "Viennese Lady Orchestra" playing dances and marches; more seriously, he wrote about the music of women composers—not, it must be said, without an occasional patronizing tone creeping in. He was an early advocate of government support for the arts, and he used arguments that could easily come from our own National Endowment for the Arts; for Shaw, as for our governmental patrons, not only is art a sign of national well-being and individual uplift, but it is also good for trade, tourism, and the tax rolls.

With the onset of age, the coming of the twentieth century, and, above all, the shifting of his interest from music to the theater and his own playwriting, Shaw's musical tastes became a bit less relentlessly up to date. Perhaps, scandalous to say, they even backslid. He began to see more than he previously had in the music of Brahms and even ventured an apology for his previous condemnation. He began, too, to see virtue in absolute music, predicting a return to it and, with this change, a new vitality for English music,

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whose early greatness he associated with a purer artistic world than was later the case in the nineteenth century.

Surprisingly, considering his dislike for the heavy English oratorio style and its practitioners, he found good in Edward Elgar and in that composer's weighty *Dream of Gerontius* (1900). In 1932 he went so far as to defend Elgar from neglect with a typical slap at the English audience: Elgar, he wrote, "has given us a land of Hope and Glory; and we have given him back the glory and kept all the hope for ourselves."

Here, then, is the musical content of Shaw's criticism as compiled, it must be admitted, by someone who can hardly be considered a Shavian. Such a rare creature in today's Anglo-American literary and intellectual world might even go on to wonder what there is in Shaw's record to justify the nearly universal assessment of him as the finest music critic in the English language. This strong judgment, which has been widely held for many years, has now been reinforced by the enthusiastic reception given to the present edition both here and in England.

On purely musical grounds, the evidence for this judgment hardly seems sufficient. Hits and misses; sympathies and limitations of taste; excesses of praise and criticism; prejudices negative and positive—Shaw, like other of his successful colleagues, was a manifestation of the zeitgeist, which in his time was full of the end of Victorian musical pieties and the triumph of the shameless Wagner.

But fortunately for Shaw's fame, his criticism rested on far more than his musical virtues. To begin with, his writing was rarely without a lively and sharp personal edge. This quality is not simply a reflection of his own artistic preferences or his willingness to display the workings of his own ego. At root, he was personal because he held individual performers (and composers) personally responsible for everything they did or caused to be done on stage. He held them to account not only for how they sang or played, but also for how they behaved and how they looked. Much of the time Shaw's attitude in this respect seems merely catty, as when he returns time after time to remark on how the conductor Richter continued to gain weight after coming to England.

But it is difficult not to feel that this approach went beyond a mere interest in gossip and personalities. In Shaw's writings there was a theoretical underpinning that suggested a philosophy going beyond a mere theory of art to become a scheme of salvation and damnation. He justified his own personal orientation to criticism in this way:

> It is the capacity for making good or bad art a personal matter that makes a man a critic. The artist who accounts for my disparagement by alleging personal animosity on my part is quite right: when people do less than their best, and do that less at once badly and self-complacently, I hate them, loathe them, detest them, long to tear them limb from limb and strew them in gobbets about the stage or platform. (At the Opera, the temptation to go out and ask one of the sentinels for the loan of his Martini, with a round or two of ammunition, that I might rid the earth of an incompetent conductor or a conceited and careless artist, has come upon me so strongly that I have been withheld only by my fear that, being no marksman, I might hit the wrong person and incur the guilt of slaying a meritorious singer.)

Mere bluster, one might say, or perhaps a cumbersome try at elfin humor. But there are other passages in Shaw's music criticism that suggest a deeper inability to distinguish art from life, and a corollary difficulty in separating rhetoric from reality. Consider, for example, a stray comment of Shaw's on operatic audiences in Frankfurt as compared to London: "The Jew rules in Frankfurt even more than in London; but he is much less flashy there than here." Later he remarks on the need to do two things to improve the Philharmonic concerts in London: first, restrict the length of the concerts to under two hours; and second, arrange "the compulsory retirement of all directors at the age of ninetyfive, into a lethal chamber if possible."

On another subject, he followed a comment on the inferiority of pianos to the keyboard instruments of Shakespeare's day by sagely observing:

> I am aware that the burning of the *châteaux* which preceded the French revolution, and indeed formed the most practical part of it, had its disadvantages, but if anything of the kind ever happens in this country, we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that for every country house that perishes, there will be a grand piano the less in the world.

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Nor can one ignore in Shaw's music criticism a strong dash of the eugenics movement so beloved by the advocates of social consciousness. This was fashionable stuff during the intellectual reign of Darwinism and of Spencer. And Shaw's idea of improving the breed typically emerged from—and was inspired by—the need to advance past the character of Wagner's youthful Siegfried. It all makes unpleasant reading nearly a century later, in our own age of population control by means fair and foul:

> The individual Siegfried has come often enough, only to find himself with the alternative of governing those who are not Siegfrieds or risking destruction at their hands. And this dilemma will persist until Wotan's inspiration comes to our governors, and they see that their business is not the devizing of laws and institutions to prop up the weaknesses of mobs and secure the survival of the unfittest, but the breeding of men whose wills and intelligences may be depended upon to produce spontaneously the social wellbeing our clumsy laws now aim at and miss. The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive; and no serious progress will be made until we address ourselves earnestly and scientifically to the task of producing trustworthy human material for society.

And shortly thereafter a footnote draws the political implications:

> The necessity for breeding the governing class from a selected stock has always been recognized by Aristocrats, however erroneous their methods of selection. We have changed our system from Aristocracy to Democracy without considering that we were at the same time changing, as regards our governing class, from Selection to Promiscuity. Those who have taken a practical part in modern politics best know how farcical the result is.

Here, perhaps, as we move from art to society, may well be found the real interest and the real contemporaneity of Shaw's music criticism. This timely quality, it must be repeated, hardly inheres in the descriptions of assorted pieces and forgotten performers. Nor does it inhere in what is plainly Shaw's questionable and flawed ability to see musical life steadily and to see it whole. In sum, Shaw's music criticism is clearly not a freestanding achievement to be understood in aesthetic terms alone. Indeed, the corpus of Shaw's music criticism is interesting chiefly as a special case of Shaw the playwright, Shaw the progressive social thinker, and Shaw the entertaining scourge of his adoring audience.

Perhaps both Shaw's musical career and its reception until today have something to tell us about music criticism itself. First, from his style we can learn that bluster and even rodomontade is all and that the critic's willingness to attack on a broad front will always make good reading. More important, we can learn that music criticism of bygone days takes its underlying interest, not from its comments about the music, which we can hear for ourselves, but rather from its documentation of wider ideas and social currents as filtered through the mind of someone who was himself an actor in those cultural movements.

And perhaps we can, in reading all of Shaw's hundreds of thousands of words on music, realize just how brilliant this intellectual freebooter was in summing up advanced thought and passing it off as his own discovery. It is even possible in reading Shaw to understand the extent to which progressive opinion of the 1890s remains progressive today—and even, for some of us, just how ugly much of it all was, and is.

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Holmes's *Common Law*

A Centennial View

SAUL TOUSTER

When I think thus of the law, I see a princess mightier than she who once wrought at Bayeux, eternally weaving into her web dim figures of the ever-lengthening past.

O. W. Holmes, Jr.

[History] is an obscenity which few escape—save at the hands of the stylist, literature, in which alone humanity is protected against tyrannous designs.

William Carlos Williams

A few years ago, by the time the portrait of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., was staring out at us daily from the fifteen-cent maroon postage stamp, his general reputation and his influence on the law were already in a state of decline. As his nineteenth-century daguerreotype features, with white military handlebar mustache and piercing eyes, were effaced by the continuous rise in first-class postage rates, his reputation was also suffering comparable erosion. And so it may also be that other great American heroes will be replaced as the rate of inflation increases. But one would expect that, in each case, some group of specialists—in this instance, the academic lawyers—would, like a fan club or a religious order, attempt to keep fresh and alive the reverence, taking every centennial opportunity to recall or restore the hero to his proper place.

The years 1981 and 1982 provide centennial occasions for possible restoration of Holmes, the once towering figure, "the great dissenter," the ideal judge in the "liberal" pantheon of the twenties and thirties, whom Benjamin Cardozo described as "the great overlord of the law and its philosophy," and whom the Freudian Jerome Frank, in an act of adoration perhaps unequaled in psychoanalytic annals, called "the completely adult jurist." In 1962—a point of recovery for a reputation already fast waning—it was Holmes's consummate style as a writer of opinions, letters, and speeches that led Edmund Wilson to describe him as "perhaps the last Roman" in American history, who alone survived the Civil War "to function as a first-rate intellect, to escape the democratic erosion." The image of Holmes's Roman toughness and vigor had, however, already been watered down by a serial popularization. We saw him first in the forties as an idealized Yankee from Olympus whose courage, originality, wit, and wisdom so overshadowed that of his father—the poet, physician, and man of letters, still remembered as the amiable Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table—that the six-foot four-inch son appeared at least eight feet tall next to his father's five-foot five; and then in the fifties he appears as The Magnificent

SAUL TOUSTER is director of the legal studies program at Brandeis University and the author of *Still Lives and Other Lives.*

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Yankee, on stage and celluloid, the heroic survivor of one war, whose crisp avuncular spirit spoke to a generation that had just survived another.

A little over a hundred years ago, in 1881, Holmes's "masterpiece," *The Common Law*, was published, and in 1882 he was called to the bench. The quotation marks around the word *masterpiece* stand not for any uncertainty as to the reception of the work by the public, bar, or intellectual community (it was never quite received as a masterpiece) but for the fact that his later influence and grandeur as a judge on the United States Supreme Court (after serving twenty years on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court) and as a legal theorist seem to require that a reverential handle be given his first work, which he himself offered to greatness. In 1931, when *The Common Law* was fifty and Holmes was turning ninety, Holmes hagiography was at its flood, and issues of the Harvard, Yale, and Columbia law reviews were dedicated to him and his works. It is hard now to appreciate the extent and manner of the reverence shown. One has to read in the period to get the flavor of Felix Frankfurter's—or Harold Laski's, or Morris Raphael Cohen's, or Jerome Frank's—call for canonization of Holmes. Frankfurter placed Holmes in a niche with Whitman and Melville and even pointed to a perhaps higher niche when he suggested that Holmes may have anticipated Freud's theory of the unconscious. Cohen compared him to Einstein and Socrates. Frank found in Holmes the ideal "leader" in the struggle to get "rid of the need for father-authority" and to achieve "high maturity," even without psychoanalysis. And Laski was patently falsifying when he wrote of "what agony of mind" Holmes suffered in coming to his "ultimate refusal to interfere in the last tragic hours of Sacco and Vanzetti." Not only is there not a shred of evidence that Holmes suffered any agony at all (in this or any other case we know of), but he thought the last-minute petition brought to him had "no shadow of a ground." "I could not feel a doubt," said Holmes. "I wrote an opinion on the spot." Petition denied, just as Holmes would have denied Laski's claim that Holmes had a deep "sense of justice," denied with the word Holmes always had ready when there was talk of justice: "humbug"—a term he used to Laski himself in connection with the Sacco-Vanzetti agitation, along with "idiotical," "twaddle," and "hysterical."

But powerful, if not great, men inspire strong responses, and matching the devotions shown by his disciples was a series of bitter attacks on Holmes launched by conservative natural-law advocates in the forties, who associated Holmes's positivism with the rise of fascism. His positivist position—which separated law from morals and justified almost any law or policy the majority, as "the dominant force" in society, might enact—was seen as the legal philosophic underpinning of the claims of the secular state to a power unconstrained by morals, religion, or natural rights. The excesses of the Holmes clerisy were here matched by the obtuseness and venom of his newly articulate opponents, who found in nazism a warning of where legal positivism (especially when colored by Holmes's penchant for military hyperbole about a soldier's duty and noble sacrifice) might—no, *did*, in their view—lead. Thus, there were articles such as the one in the *American Bar Association Journal* of 1945 entitled "Hobbes, Holmes, and Hitler."

To be clear of these excesses, one must correct the distortions on both sides: Holmes was neither a humane liberal democrat nor a proto-Fascist. Still, if one had to choose, one would have to say that on the Supreme Court Holmes served well the liberal agenda of the teens, twenties, and thirties by eloquently upholding the right of the majority, acting through their legislatures, to have their say and way on social legislation, free of judicial intervention or veto. Personally, though, he saw most of the legislation and social experiment as misguided "humbug" (or worse: "Some kind of despotism is at the bottom of the seeking for change"). Also on the liberal side was his Darwinian view of labor unions: since force and self-preference are the ultimate ratio of social life, workers should be able to organize to fight organized capital in the struggle for existence. He didn't think this would get them or the society anywhere, but he thought it a rule of survival that had to be obeyed. In similar fashion he justified his latter-day coming to an eloquent (but limited) free-speech position in seditious advocacy

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cases on two grounds: that such ideas as were advocated were entitled to compete in "the market," where "time has upset many fighting faiths," and that the ideas were, in any event, puny and ignorant and thus hardly dangerous. On the other side of the Janus face, that of the proto-Fascist, there is less substantive support, although it must be admitted that to the military rhetoric of his speeches and to the hyperbole of his jurisprudence—which postulated that all social life rests on the death of others and which advised us to view the law as the bad man does, so as to determine exactly where its sanctions lie—should be added his powerful interest in the genetic improvement of the race, an interest that could erupt in another kind of eloquence, as it did in at least one case, *Buck* v. *Bell*. "Three generations of imbeciles are enough," said Holmes in upholding a Virginia law permitting the sterilization of a feebleminded eighteen-year-old woman, who was the daughter of a feebleminded mother, and who herself had already borne a feebleminded child. "It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes." It is not so much that, with the benefits of hindsight, we can judge the judgment of the Virginia legislature and the courts, in this and other situations, and find them wanting; it is the intensity of Holmes's language that chills us—a language that was already modified, by the insistence of his brethren, from an even more "brutal" original draft.

But in order not to get caught in the backwash of these old controversies that influenced the ebb and flow of Holmes's general reputation, we should turn to the more scholarly and thoughtful reappraisals. In 1957 the first volume of Mark Howe's projected full-scale biography of Holmes, *The Shaping Years, 1841–1870*, appeared, clearly delineating the shaping force of the Civil War. Howe had previously tried to restore some perspective to the Holmes controversy after World War II by viewing Holmes's positivism as a rejection of nineteenth-century metaphysical idealism. He saw Holmes's skepticism as an outcome of his bitter battle experiences in the Civil War, a perspective taken up by Edmund Wilson in 1962 in his *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*. In 1963 Howe's second volume came out—*The Proving Years, 1870–1882*—a masterful study of the intellectual and cultural influences (again nineteenth century) that formed Holmes's thinking as a philosopher-scholar in the law and determined the shape and substance of *The Common Law*. That year also saw the publication of Howe's new edition of *The Common Law*, and so there was a natural occasion for a reconsideration of the man and the book. By this time a sense of the ambiguities and double-facedness of Holmes had already surfaced—what Daniel Boorstin called the "elusiveness" of the man—and the commentary on Howe's work reflected this by more cautious judgments on Holmes and his influence as a legal theorist and judge. Among them was a powerfully argued and documented critique of Holmes's work on the Supreme Court by the late Yosal Rogat, in which Holmes's callousness to civil liberties, as exemplified by his consistent denial of the constitutional claims of Negroes and aliens, was explored. Rogat's work was important in providing a lasting corrective to the myth of Holmes as one of "the most liberty-alert Justices of all time." Perhaps more important was Rogat's analysis of Holmes's reasoning. He reveals how Holmes—the Holmes who magisterially told us, "The life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience"—continuously resorted to a legalistic logic rather than the counsels of human experience in liberty-sensitive matters. By 1965, it was clear that he was no longer the "overlord of the law."

One note struck in this newer commentary, echoing a note we hear whenever and wherever Holmes is the subject of attention, and from whatever side, is that of the power of Holmes as a writer. It is the obligatory cliché—whether one is decrying the cavalier way he treated the facts of a case before him or heralding him as bringing the clarity of an unforgettable epigram to a babel of judges—that Holmes could write like the devil. Indeed, he could. It is more than a cliché. At times, of course, we hear, in the remarks of admirers, the vulgar tonalities of those who view any inflated rhetoric as "poetry." But

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sometimes this is just the surface of a deeper intuition—that language, which has mysterious power, must derive its power from art. In Holmes's case this is true. *The Common Law*, although a work largely unread in the last few generations and perhaps never fully read at any time, yet survives among us as a designated monument of legal thought, mainly by virtue of passages that have been continuously quoted. Indeed, these passages, which have a compelling power even today, seem to have taken on a life of their own, divorced from the book, and are selectively at the service of the reigning orthodoxy or of the quite different sides of any number of disputes in legal philosophy. In this sense, they give the work the quality of a commonplace book, if not the bible it was thought to be at one time.

But monuments, important as they may be as landmarks that help us place ourselves in the historic landscape, may also serve as walls—high and imposing achievements, even if somewhat in ruin—that block our view of what lies behind them. If, as we pursue the task of reconsideration, we ask what lies behind this landmark, we will, I think, find the answer as much in terms of literary values as in legal or philosophic analysis. We will have to attend to Holmes's language much as we do the poet's or novelist's language. We continue to read Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* even though its factual basis has long been proved unsound, because it is essentially a work of the imagination, reflecting the creative engagement of the whole man with his subject and evidencing a philosophy of life that is of interest beyond its time. It is in the same spirit that we must approach Holmes's *Common Law*—as a work representing both the person and ideal of the author in struggle with the life of the law and projecting, in subtle and important ways, a vision of the lawyer and the scholar in the law. It is by thus taking his language seriously that we will, I think, find the sources of his extraordinary and, at times, unfathomable influence on the law and of the powerful public image he created. We should also find clues to help overcome the continual elusiveness of the man and his enigmatic doubleness: the realist who hated facts; the puritan who acted the cavalier (Banish morals from the discourse of the law!); the skeptic who, with contempt for the enthusiasm of do-gooders, was himself an enthusiast of the law; the philosopher who saw as his object the framing of general propositions that, in any event, wouldn't be "worth a damn"; the aloof aristocrat who, in giving the mob its misguided head, is viewed as a humane democrat; in short, the cold, hard man whose favorite word was *passion*.

Although Holmes was used to speaking about being "kicked into the law," at times blaming his father, the evidence suggests that he himself made the choice pretty much the way most of us make important choices. That is, the choice is never simple, there are attractive alternatives; nor is the choice so clear-cut as to be unaccompanied by lingering doubts. And when one is young, there is always the anxiety that it is not one's own choice at all but one's father's or the world's. A few days after Fort Sumter was fired upon, when Holmes was twenty and still at college, he enlisted in the army and marched off to war voluntarily and with enthusiasm. He was afterward, however, to transform his experiences by framing as the metaphor of the law's coercive power, and its sacrifice of the individual to society's needs, an entirely different figure—that of conscripts being seized and marched off, "with bayonets in their rear, to death." My reference to this figure from the early pages of *The Common Law* is intended to suggest not so much that Holmes revised in memory the experiences of his life—which he surely did, more than most of us, I think—but that Holmes used those experiences in the deepest ways, much the way an artist does, to give powerful life to his work in the law.

Holmes's struggle with the life of the law, or what might better be called his life *in* the law, can be most usefully explored by looking at the two choices he made that bracket the fifteen years of intellectual and scholarly work he did between law school and the publication of *The Common Law*. First, there is his choice of law as a calling; and second, after *The Common Law* was completed, there is his choice to give up a life of scholarship for a judicial career. At the outset, the law's call to him was rather uncertain. When he had graduated from Harvard a few months after his enlistment, young Holmes, the class poet,

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wrote in his class album: "The tendencies of the family and of myself have a strong bent for literature . . . [but] if I survive the war I expect to study law as my profession or at least for a starting point." In the three years of soldiering that followed, young Holmes was, as he put it, "soaked in a sea of death." He was three times wounded, once left for dead on the battlefield, and once near death from a virulent dysentery. Most of his friends were killed or maimed. He had paid in full what he came to call "the butcher's bill" and left the army before the war was over. His "bent for literature" continued to lead him to poetry, but the experiences of war seemed to end the impulse, an ending he marked with a memorial poem to himself and his soldier classmates whom he saw as "all untuned amid the din of battle." We should remember this, for when Holmes did turn to the law after leaving the army, it was on the elegiac note that "the cannon's roar" has "stilled the song," and on the stoic note that "we do in silence what the world shall sing."

Holmes's first encounter with the law was at Harvard Law School in what he later described as "a thick fog of details—in a black and frozen night, in which there were no flowers, no spring, no easy joys." He was still wrestling with his muse, bemoaning the fact that "truth sifts so slowly from the dust of the law." But the law began to weave its compelling spell. His first moot court excited him so much that it seemed to agitate a war wound with the prospect of battle, where he might "stick the enemy in the guts." He had first framed his choice as between poetry and philosophy, and then as between philosophy and the law. Philosophy was apparently the middle term, the psychological bridge between poetry and the law, and when he crossed that bridge it was "law-law-law," as he put it at the time in a letter to William James. He was reconciled to it for "the simple discipline of the work" and the "increasing conviction" that law might be approached and studied in a philosophic way. And if he looked back at the muse, it was almost with contempt. "If a man chooses a profession he cannot forever content himself in picking out the plums with fastidious dilettantism and give the rest of the loaf to the poor, but must eat his way manfully through crust and crumb."

Holmes began his career in the law with a combination of practice and scholarly work, and one can imagine that the practitioner's sense of combat must have fueled the student's aspiration for achievement. One cannot speak of Holmes's decisions to engage in scholarly work—his editing of the *American Law Review*, his early writings in it, or his undertaking the revision of Kent's *Commentaries*—as a separate career choice, since such engagement seemed implicit in his original acceptance of the law as worthy of his philosophic ideals. But the way he pursued that scholarly work is another matter. It was at this time and with this new scholarly pursuit, however, that the relentless ambition, the hardness and coldness of the man began to be seen and commented on. William James soon found that his warm spiritual and intellectual relation with Holmes had so soured that he could remark on the "cold-blooded, conscious egotism and conceit" by which "all the noble qualities of Wendell Holmes are poisoned." By the time Holmes had completed his edition of Kent and was embarked on the work leading to *The Common Law*, he had become to James "a powerful battery, formed like a planing machine to gouge a deep self-beneficial groove through life."

I have not intended to dwell on Holmes's failings or, as one ironic critic of Holmes put it, "to elevate [him] from deity to mortality." Any reader of Mark Howe's volume on the making of *The Common Law* will be familiar with the story of Holmes—his preoccupied, isolating, self-absorbed intellectual work in the law, his driving ambition to do something really great before he was forty, and his sacrifice of all else in that cause. One need not rehearse that story to recognize here the image of the lawyer-scholar as grind, or in Holmes's special version, which emphasized the manliness of his choice, the lawyer-scholar as lonely soldier in a joyless terrain, excited by the prospect of combat but for whom, in the end, even victory is not as important as the harsh duty he must do. It is only with reference to this commitment of his life to the law that we can understand that when Holmes, some fifteen years later, described the Soldier's Faith, he was describing his lawyer's faith as well—that "faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw

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away his life in obedience to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign of which he has no notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use."

Turning to the text of *The Common Law*, then, we should not be surprised that its terrain reflects that of the inner man. What we are confronted with, in the main, is the thick fog of details, the black and frozen night, in which a few passages shine forth—moments of heroism, one might say—those lucid and marvelous periods by which Holmes's inner struggle is transformed into insights about the law that are immediately understandable and intensely felt. As for the rest, it is the usual dust of the law that we all know. Why this small measure, we might ask? We recall the broad intellectual culture Holmes brought to the work—his readings in philosophy, anthropology, and history, and his effort to bring the law into the mainstream of the intellectual life of the time. Holmes's ambition for *The Common Law* was, indeed, a very high one—to do from the materials of the common law what Sir Henry Maine in his *Ancient Law* had done from the materials of the Roman law twenty years before. Maine's book had traced the evolution of early Western legal institutions by a new historical method and had arrived at several general propositions about how law and its institutions develop. Both the method and the propositions—for example, that law, in its formal aspects, moves from a period of legal fictions, to that of equity or case law, to that of legislation; or, in its substantive aspect, moves from status to contract—had an extraordinary impact at the time. Holmes seems to have been determined to do a comparable work of historical analysis for the common law and even went so far as to structure his book, chapter by chapter, on the model of Maine's work. And Holmes apparently wanted to go further than Maine by using the new biological and anthropological materials on evolution that the Darwinian revolution in thought was providing. His work was to be *scientific* in the largest sense. Why, then, the clear, if not always acknowledged, failure of the work? Without really acknowledging the work to be a failure, Mark Howe ascribed the problems in the book to a mistake of method—that is, Holmes's use of the materials of history to do the work of philosophy—a point that may be more revealing, and damning, than Howe realized. For when history and biology and anthropology are used to demonstrate a thesis, we get not science but the very opposite; and, indeed, Holmes's use of evidence—a mélange of materials and references, from diverse periods, used quite ahistorically—is the root of the tendentiousness we so often feel in the work. And when we add to this Holmes's view, taken from his contemporary in legal history, Henry Adams, that the origins of Anglo-Saxon legal institutions are to be found in the practices of the Teutonic tribes and not in Roman institutions (a subject Adams may have been a master of but Holmes was not), the work could hardly be rescued from its difficulties.

Given the ambition of the author, the work is a surprise. It is preoccupied with the early common law in its most detailed and picayune aspects. Holmes's attention to early forms of action, the dicta of cases from the Year Books, narrow readings on points of law—in short, to early cases and the principles derived from them—gives one the hermetic feeling of being *inside* the law at the same time as the author is advising us to look to the forces *outside* the law that give it its shape and substance. In a way, this is an early version of the vice that Rogat found in Holmes's Supreme Court opinions in civil liberties matters. Holmes speaks eloquently of how we must look to experience, yet suffers himself to be confined by the narrow systemic logic of the law. In this, his work in *The Common Law* may be seen to be closer than anyone would imagine to that of Christopher C. Langdell, dean of the Harvard Law School and founder of the case method of law school study. In 1880, Holmes had called Langdell "the greatest living legal theologian" and associated his idea of science in the law with "the powers of darkness." It was, therefore, no doubt a painful irony that the most perceptive contemporary review of *The Common Law*—published anonymously, but now known to be the work of A. V. Dicey—should speak of a similar lapse in Holmes, who was seen as dealing "with the texts of the common law in much the same way in which speculative but orthodox theologians deal with the text of Scripture."

As for the powers of light, Holmes would

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obviously associate them with the liberating work of Maine. But Maine is conspicuous in *The Common Law* by his absence, suffering the additional indignity of having his thesis on the movement of the law from status to contract associated in a footnote with Blackstone! But it is more important to note what Maine had and Holmes did not: that is, an interest in social structure and the sense of the complexity of society. It is the absence of this interest in social structure, this sense of institutional complexity, that leaves Holmes's work quite barren. Maine did not develop his thesis out of the air, but by an attention to the family as an evolving institution and to its role and function in early Western history. Similarly, what leads us to continue to read the great English legal historian William Maitland is his concern for the forces outside the law. His picture of the early sources of criminal law is subtly composed, with shadows and highlights, depicting clan and family relations, compositions of the blood feud (itself a complex of conciliations), and other institutional elements that make Holmes's notion, stated at the beginning of his book, "that the early forms of legal procedure were grounded in vengeance," appear simpleminded and wrong. In like fashion we find Holmes's own sweeping thesis that the movement of common law is from subjective, internal, moral standards to objective, external, amoral standards to be unsupported by his own evidence or by his brilliant metaphoric epigrams on animal psychology or biological evolution.

Another great influence on Holmes, John Austin, is also neglected in *The Common Law*. Holmes never treated those central tenets of legal positivism he took from Austin, whether it was to acknowledge, qualify, or argue with them (and there were, indeed, many important matters on which Holmes disagreed with Austin). Although Holmes's main scholarly project in the book, to banish the language and ideas of morality from legal discourse, was essentially an Austinian one, what do we find there of Austin? Four or five places where his points on more or less minor legal issues are referred to, three of them showing Austin to have been wrong. Holmes was notorious for not giving credit to his intellectual forebears and for being petty in his insistence on the primacy of his own contributions; but this streak of egoism has especially dire consequences for the book, which ends by being disappointing in its general discourse on ideas. For example, Holmes in his preface says that his "general view of the common law" will require that one know what the law "has been and what it tends to become. We must alternately consult history and existing theories of legislation." Holmes tells us clearly and well that it is the forces outside the law that determine its growth, but he does not himself really look to them or weigh them. As for theories of legislation, he does not address them—neither the theories of Bentham or Mill nor the issues raised by Reconstruction or social legislation. What there is is very much limited to discussion of the criminal law in its strict sense, and there we find Holmes's own theory of liability as the model for all law: that law derives from vengeance, that the ultimate rule and reason of private persons as well as of society is "a justifiable self-preference," and that this will express itself in force to compel people to live up to an objective standard of conduct for the good or survival of society.

From this view—surely a vision derived from the ethos of war—it is a short distance to believing that law is simply how that force will work in the courts or, as Holmes will later say in *The Path of the Law*, "what the courts will do in fact." With this as the focus of attention, it is no wonder that his concept of law should be so case bound, so litigation oriented, the result, in effect, of trials conducted by lawyer-combatants. Where Maine's vision, and Maitland's as well, derives from the civil society and is concerned with institutions in all their complexity, Holmes's is a narrow one, concentrating on conflicts, court cases, and litigation, a vision that tends to cut us off from understanding the many various ways by which society pursues its values or addresses conflict. It is in this sense that I identified Holmes's Soldier's Faith with his notion of the lawyer's. A lawyer's faith is true and adorable when it leads him to do his duty in a client's cause, which he need not understand, and to serve the client's plan and purposes, to which he can remain oblivious.

If this were all, we could simply place Holmes's personal philosophy and those propositions he set out to prove in *The Com-*

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mon Law in the perspective of the Civil War. What we must be amazed by instead is how he transformed his war experience into a legal philosophy that seemed to others to be fresh and life-giving, unconnected with its sources in death and despair. This creative misprision might be ascribed to a confluence of two forces: the artist-like personal struggle in the man and the surrounding social conditions, which, although he tried to remain oblivious to them, had already marked his spirit. When Holmes was playing with the notion that vengeance is a prime source of law, Federal troops were withdrawing from the South, echoing the end of one vengeance, the North upon the South, and the beginning of another, the whites upon the blacks. When he was saying that the ultimate reason and rule of private persons, as well as of society, is "a justifiable self-preference," he found an approving echo in the robber-baron world of laissez-faire capitalism. And when he was thinking of force and the sacrifice of individuals to the social good, he imagined conscripts being marched off, "with bayonets in their rear, to death"—an image vibrant not only with the memories of a war only fifteen years behind but also with the conditions of the near-conscripts serving in the factories of New England. What makes Holmes's style so vivid, so felt, is this relation between his inner world, which cannot be entirely repressed, and an outer world, which is receptive because it is so much a part of the experience that made him. Once Holmes took his turn down the dark path of the law, I think it no exaggeration to say that when he was talking about law, he was talking about war; and when he was talking about war, he was living it through the images of law, with the soldier, scholar, and lawyer being superimposed on one another.

If anyone doubts this, let him read Holmes's address entitled "The Use of Law Schools," delivered just five years after *The Common Law*, where he speaks of the "little army of specialists" marching forth from the university, among whom are the lawyers, fed on the "manly diet" of the law:

> They carry no banners, they beat no drums; but where they are, men learn that bustle and push are not the equals of quiet genius and serene mastery. They compel others who need their help, or who are enlightened by their teaching, to obedience and respect. They set the example themselves; for they furnish in the intellectual world a perfect type of the union of democracy with discipline. They bow to no one who seeks to impose his authority by foreign aid; they hold that science like courage is never beyond the necessity of proof, but must always be ready to prove itself against all challengers. But to one who has shown himself a master, they pay the proud reverence of men who know what valiant combat means, and who reserve the right of combat against their leader even, if he should seem to waver in the service of Truth, their only queen.

The military metaphors that determined his vision were almost demonstrably enacted by Holmes, finding sympathetic echo in the world. And so we have here the call to intellectual adventure that so resonates with that other kind of adventure, turn-of-the-century imperialism, that it is not strange that "Bully" Teddy Roosevelt would, in a few years, name Holmes to the Supreme Court as much for his ideological leanings as for his juristic capacities. Real intellectual adventure, real scholarship, requires a communal effort of a special kind, which builds on the work of scholars from the past and contributes to the work of scholars in the future. But this was hardly for Holmes, whose vision of himself as scholar was that of the isolated thinker. He likened himself to Fridtjof Nansen, the explorer, and forgetting what an extraordinary group effort Arctic exploration must be, he spoke of the courage one needs to leave one's fellow adventurers behind, to go forth alone "into a deeper solitude and greater trials." The image is of the lonely soldier for whom survival is all. It is this image, enacted so painfully by Holmes in the writing of the book, that gives the language its vital quality while at the same time causing the oversimplification, the soldier's insensitivity to social complexity.

And yet, despite his failure to achieve in his book what he had set out to do, Holmes did develop a legal theory that, as refined and elaborated on in his later career, was to have a dominant influence, if not *the* dominant influence, on American jurisprudence in the first half of the century. What Holmes did was to set out a theory as to the nature of the judicial process that recognized that judges, in deciding cases, played a creative role in laying

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down the rules by which we are governed. These rules are, as he put it at the outset of the book, the result of value choices that judges make, which reflect "the felt necessities of the time, the prevalent moral and political theories, intuitions of public policy, avowed or unconscious, even the prejudices judges share with their fellow-men." Holmes's work served as a clear division between two sets of juridical assumptions. The old set assumed that judges "found" the law, whose existence preceded any case that came before them, either in the form of custom or in logical inferences that could be drawn from previous cases. This idea—that the whole cloth of the law lay, so to speak, on the judge's bench to be unfolded or rearranged, its patterns implicit in it, only to be discovered—was what Holmes found hateful in Langdell's deductive method, which was concerned only with what Holmes criticized as "the *elegantia juris*, or *logical* integrity of the system as a system." What Holmes replaced this with was a more inductive method, whereby the judge had to test his judicial choices against the social ends and values that the legal rules served; the judge could do this creatively by the way he read the prior cases, or interpreted a statute, or even "made" law in those cases where there seemed to be no law. In the latter instances, Holmes saw that the whole cloth of the law had more holes than anyone imagined, despite the pretense, which he would later derogate, that the law was "a brooding omnipresence." Holmes did not at this time address the question of how judges were to reflect social values or weigh social ends; and when he did later, his lack of a sense of social complexity left him suspended in an admonitory posture. Just as he had pointed to forces outside the law but had not himself explored them, he would later point to an unexamined "science" as the solution to all problems, even those of values or ends.

But, to return to *The Common Law*, its underlying value system could probably best be characterized as simply utilitarian. The judge-made law was to serve society's ends much the way Benthamite legislation should, and it was this that gave warrant to Holmes's clear declaration that the judge's decision was *legislative in its grounds*. And just as Bentham had tried to make the process of legislation scientific, Holmes tried to make his theory of the judicial process scientific by dissociating the law's commands from a morality that necessarily imported the uncertain grounds of subjectivity and internality. It is here we can discern the roots of his hard-nosed positivism and a realism that relies on a behavioristic model and is the support of liberal views on social engineering. These tendencies would find full expression in that short work—an address of some thirty-five pages—*The Path of the Law* (1897), which is his acknowledged masterpiece in jurisprudence. Indeed, the strongest passages of *The Common Law*, no more than thirty pages, perhaps, can be read as the Ur-text of *The Path of the Law*.

When Holmes had criticized Langdell "for his seemingly exclusive belief in the study of cases," he echoed a warning he had taken from Burke: that the law sharpened the mind by narrowing it. "A case lawyer is apt to want breadth," said Holmes. And yet it was, as I've noted, just such concern for cases that led to the want of breadth and the failings of *The Common Law*. For again we must take note that Holmes's theory, although couched in the terms of law—all law—offers a very narrow slice of it: it was basically a theory of the judiciary alone, one that was limited to the special conditions of common-law development during a period before legislation became the dominant mode of lawmaking. Indeed, it is an irony that this theory of how courts make law should have found its full expression just when, at the end of the nineteenth century, legislation had become the acknowledged and central means by which the state pursued social ends. It is an irony that, in the case of Holmes, would be compounded; for, just as Holmes would later take the strong position that the courts should defer to the legislature on matters of social policy, the legislature being the truer reflection of the dominant forces in society, his own theory as to the active lawmaking role of courts (themselves acting legislatively) would indirectly serve to justify judicial vetoes on social legislation.

Holmes's view of the law as the outcome of a kind of social warfare and of lawsuits as kinds of duels fought by lawyer-combatants may be seen as the underside of the judge's

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higher role as determiner or reflector of social values. Together the two sides served to place lawsuits and the case opinions by which they were resolved at the center of attention as the most significant, if not exclusive, source of legal theory. Holmes's preoccupations with the judicial could thus find very little favor in England where parliamentary supremacy was so well established that a legal theory, to carry weight, had to engage the legislative and administrative issues that were the grist of the law in action. But this was not Holmes's domain, and so it was only Holmes's speculations on specific doctrines in tort, or contracts, or criminal law that would perturb the British waters. In the United States, however, where judicial supremacy might be postulated by virtue of the constitutional doctrine of judicial review, Holmes's attention to the courts and what they could do might be accepted as almost natural. And this was true as well of the "scientific" method of Langdell, which directed attention to what the courts did and said in case reports. It may be strange that these two, so apparently different, should find a convergence of emphasis and so inaugurate a lawyer's jurisprudence that would dominate legal education and legal theory in America for the next century. Thus, Holmes was right to see his work as leading to "a little army" of lawyer-specialists to be produced by Langdell's Harvard Law School to serve under the adversary banner of "the dominant forces" in society—hardly of "Truth."

With this reading of *The Common Law*, it is, perhaps, unnecessary to ask why Holmes made his next important choice—to give up the chair professorship at Harvard Law School, which his book had earned him, and to accept an appointment to the bench. Still, it is worth reflecting on the reasons Holmes himself gave for this choice. At the time, he felt that he could not "without moral loss decline any share in the practical struggle of life which naturally offered itself and for which he believed himself fitted." So far, so good, but then he went on to raise a challenge to which he did not respond:

> I had already realized at Cambridge that the field for generalization inside the body of the law was small and that the day would soon come when one felt that the only remaining problems were of detail and that as a philosopher he must go over into other fields—whether of ethics—theory of legislation—political economy or anthropology—history &c depending on the individual, but that somehow he must extend his range. I was however as happy as a man could desire but I felt that if I declined the struggle offered me I should never be so happy again—I should feel that I had chosen the less manly course.

One would have thought the manly course would have been to accept the challenge and extend his range. But, of course, once this note is sounded, it resounds through a lifetime on the bench, as if to justify a choice that hardly needed justification in the first place. Thus:

> Academic life is but half life—it is withdrawal from the fight in order to utter smart things that cost you nothing except the thinking of them from a cloister. . . . Business in the world is unhappy, often seems mean, and always challenges your power to idealize the brute fact—but it hardens the fibre and I think is more likely to make more of a man of one who turns it to success.

Holmes must have sensed that he was not made out to be a scholar, that in *The Common Law* he had not done what he had hoped to do. His strengths were not for sustained intellectual work but rather for quick insight and intuitive grasp, and the style he mastered—epigrammatic, personal, cryptic—reflected this. We might then frame his choice of the judge's vocation over the scholar's as the choice of the more congenial genre, the judicial opinion over the essay or book. For, after all, he was an utterer of "smart things"; and instead of research and facts, his other genres—speeches and letters—allowed him public and private play for his brilliant sallies as much as his opinions did. As Mark Howe suspected, Holmes may well have realized "that his greatest gifts and most ardent tastes were for clarifying *aperçus*, rather than for systematic thought."

As for his remark about "the struggle offered," other than reinforcing the need to believe that his choice, as always, must be the *manly* one, I think we can treat his move to the bench more as a withdrawal than as an engagement. You will recall that, after his

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three years of soldiering, Holmes had left the army before the war had ended, having paid "the butcher's bill." One can read his choice of the bench as a comparable retreat from the warrior's role. On the bench he would be above the battle, and he might be renewed in his perhaps true vocation, not as combatant, but as spectator to the battles fought before him. Indeed, it is the spectator motif that must dominate any portrait of Holmes. He was so far removed from the world that he would report, with a contemptuous pride, that he never read newspapers. The ordinary and day-to-day hardly concerned the man who would acknowledge only the cosmos, and his distance from the ordinary affairs of humankind could be measured on the bench by his growing distance from anything that might be described as art. Five years as a judge and he could find no better way to testify to his love of the law than to diminish his once-honored muse: "How small a thing seem the novelists' tales . . . ; how pale a phantom even the Circe of poetry." Even philosophy and anthropology are set aside as he stands before his mistress, the Law, as one of the "actors in a drama of which she is the providence and overruling power."

Neither the bite of his wit nor the grandeur of his language should blind us to the vision of the law that has been his lasting legacy. Shaped by a warrior's perspective, it assumes a battlefield and not a city, a martial condition of stark alternatives and not the gradings and shadows that normally surround us on the human journey. It gave us a jurisprudence of lawyering narrowly reflecting an adversarial ideal and a philosophy that came so close to saying that might made right that only the scandal of the thought kept him and his trembling admirers from the brink. No matter how much we admire the human struggle in Holmes and the way he transformed his experience of war into something close to art, no matter how much we respect a philosophy so deeply earned and so honorably declared, we still must ask: At what cost to the law has his influence been felt these hundred years?

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Finding Wild Strawberries

(for my mother)

JAROLD RAMSEY

I.

In your terrible austerity of grief
after his funeral, you said a thing
so shocking I held my hands out, warding the blow—
"I know I'll never be happy again,
not in the old way, never."
The man's death upon them both,
what son's a consolation to the widow?
Fathoming your loss as though I'd never
been born, I stood corrected there,
a map of scars in either hand.

II.

Five years—Mother, who am I
to testify that you are happy now, or never?
Yet, hiking with us over Bunchgrass Ridge,
rangy as your grandkids, you are first
to smell the wild strawberries underfoot
and bring us to our knees around you
in the morning grass, and find each one
his perfect berry, dropping them like rubies
in our eager hands.
Am I the only one to notice who is missing?
I search your smiling face for evidence
of loss repealed by joy.
The brief sweetness of a berry
burns my tongue.

JAROLD RAMSEY, a professor of English at the University of Rochester, is author of *Dermographia*, a collection of poems, and the forthcoming *Reading the Fire*, a volume of interpretive essays of Indian literature.

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On a Quiet Street

ALBERT GOLDBARTH

> *A gray Plymouth sedan tailed me away from the City Hall. I gave it a chance to catch up with me on a quiet street. It refused the offer, so I shook it off and went about my business.*
>
> —Raymond Chandler

Across the field, resolute as a rector, a stand
of birches punishes sky. A something
wary in the day, as if once at ease, snaps
into attention. Here, the paving's thin
and an elegant pair of streetcar tracks, like the graph
of an earlier generaton's marriages, shows through.
They follow each other. They shine, just a little
they shine. But mainly the day is gray. Somewhere
the Ganges is marking out the dirty hemline
of eternal life, as it shows in this world, on a pier.
A dancer is bleeding into her toe shoes. Somebody
stuffs confetti into a small striped cardboard tube,
whose job is stuffing such tubes by the several hundred
by the hour while the clock's gray face, like so
many faces, ticks. Two swans are a perfect white 22
on a black Iowa laketop, now they touch with great
economy and grace. And my
father is dying. You wouldn't know about it,
except for this. That's all. A little gray sedan,
an ash in a plate at the Automat, the one cloud garbling
a radio's assurances of sun. This isn't

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the day the lab report admits a horrible white lie
in his marrow is eating the little red truth left, no.
That was last week. Now it's today, it's
any day really, a secretary whites out a word,
a name maybe, and my father is dying. You're
reading a poem. A Chinese artist checks
that his waterfall follows the grain of his wood.
I think of the dancer, and of ritual. I think
another dancer, in a tutu saying
swan, approaches and something with meaning takes place.
They break a glass at a Jewish wedding but
never use the word hymen, they dance, I think
of my mother a girl on a streetcar, holding the full-lipped rose
he gave her while the wires overhead crackled blue in the hard
gray air of February, Chicago, 1947—something soft
and durable, an earlier generation. A hawk
rakes down. A calf on the pampas bleats—luggage
is monogrammed; animals, branded. A party
in Paris a century after Seurat perfects his pointillism, is
figures done in confetti: his paintings,
exactly, but come to life. A microscope checks its
highest setting. Something gray, a bit
of used eraser, a feather a pigeon let eddy and land.
You're almost done with this poem. Even the dancers
are tired, thinking something their own about later
tonight: the clean cerise bedsheets and Rhine wine.
I'm almost done with this poem. We'll be
leaving the page. It doesn't really matter, we're
so foreign to each other, you and I, but I'd like to
think it a ritual gesture when we turn away, a kind
of pas de deux. Now one of the swans is gone.
I'd like to think it a benison.

✪ALBERT GOLDBARTH teaches at the University of Texas–Austin. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, the *Kenyon Review*, and the *American Poetry Review*, among other journals.

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EDUCATION

The SAT

JAY AMBERG

At any rate they keep out the half-witted.
—Lord Bloomfield on competitve examinations.

Parents at a suburban high school open house ask an English teacher what he is doing to prepare their son for the Scholastic Aptitude Test—not for college, but for the SAT. A senior in high school writes in an essay, "Although being an upperclassman is often a lot of fun, taking the SAT causes tension and aggravation." Parents of high school seniors, talking at a party, compare their children's SAT scores—as though high scores certify intelligence and low scores suggest stupidity. A senior in high school who has just received average SAT scores announces to a friend that she will never amount to anything in life. A young man sues the Educational Testing Service, the creators of the SAT, because he feels he has been discriminated against by ETS. During a job interview, an employer asks a twenty-four-year-old graduate student what her SAT scores were.

Applying to American colleges is often a confusing and frustrating rite of passage—perhaps *the* American rite of passage. Many students, their parents, and much of the American public believe that the SAT is the crucial factor, the gatekeeper, in this rite. Many students consider the day they receive their SAT scores the second most important day in their educational lives. (The first is the day they are actually accepted or rejected at the college of their choice.) Anyone who doubts this needs only to talk to high school seniors—or to browse through the scores of articles that appear yearly in popular magazines and in newspapers.

In European countries, standardized tests have historically been the gatekeepers to higher education. In France all students graduating from public schools must take standardized state examinations. Those students, for example, who attend the lycées, the academic secondary schools, must take the *baccalauréat* examination. Those who pass the *baccalauréat* (sometimes as few as 60 percent of those taking it) are admitted to most French universities. In Great Britain, the "eleven-plus" examination was until recently administered to all students at the age of eleven. Those who failed the "eleven-plus," about four-fifths of the students, went on to secondary modern schools, which offered a general education, or to technical schools, which provided vocational training. Those who passed the "eleven-plus" attended academic grammar schools in preparation for the universities. Even though the "eleven-plus" is no longer required in most locales and comprehensive high schools offering all three programs have begun to replace the segregated schools, secondary school students planning to attend college still must take the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations administered by the universities. Although SAT scores are by no means the sole—or even the most important—admissions criterion used by American colleges, many Americans have come to believe that the SAT is as crucial to their children's educational future as the *baccalauréat* is to the French or the Advanced Level GCE is to the British.

The current public confusion about the SAT suggests a number of questions about the test itself, the Educational Testing Service, and the College Entrance Examination Board, the original creators of the SAT: How is the SAT

JAY AMBERG is the author of *Verbal Review and Workbook for the SAT*, recently published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

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used—and how *should* it be used—by American college admissions officers? Is the SAT a *fair* measure of scholastic aptitude? For that matter, what is the SAT—and what exactly does it attempt to measure? What, if anything, can or should young people do to prepare for the test? Why has the public concern about and criticism of the SAT intensified in the last decade? Do ETS and the College Board have the sort of gatekeeping power attributed to them? And finally, to put all of these questions into historical perspective, why was the SAT created in the first place?

The need for a standardized college admissions examination became obvious at the turn of the century. Admissions requirements to American colleges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been classical: applicants had only to demonstrate that they could read and write Latin and Greek. During the nineteenth century admissions requirements expanded considerably (Harvard, for example, added arithmetic in 1807; the University of Michigan added United States history in 1869), but there was little standardization. Before 1870 a student wanting to go to college had to take a separate admissions test for each school. There was no substantial agreement among leading colleges about how much preparation was needed—or even what subjects were required. In 1870 Michigan set up the first accrediting system requiring applicants to present a diploma or secondary school certificate. Nonetheless, admission to American colleges was still chaotic in the 1890s.

In 1900 a group of educators formed the College Board to standardize college admission procedures and to act as a liaison between secondary schools and colleges. A major responsibility of the College Board was the creation of examinations, "these to be thorough, fair, uniform, and judiciously administered by a board of national recognition." The College Board today includes as members more than twenty-five-hundred colleges and universities, secondary schools, and education associations and agencies, but its original purpose still guides the organization. A 1977 report of the Committee on College Board Mission and Accountability concluded, "The purposes of the College Board as stated in the Charter remain consonant with the needs and purposes of the contemporary American educational system." Chief among the purposes listed in the charter is "the continuance and development of a program of tests and examinations."

In the late 1940s, the College Board contracted with the Educational Testing Service (ETS), a private nonprofit corporation, to produce the SAT and other standardized tests. ETS today provides a variety of services, including a substantial amount of educational research, but it remains best known for its standardized tests. Each year more than a million and a half high school students take the SAT; another million and a quarter high school juniors take the PSAT, a preliminary scholastic aptitude test used to determine qualifications for National Merit Scholarships. More than a million additional students take other ETS tests, including the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), and the National Teacher Examination (NTE). As the number of persons taking the ETS exams increases, so does ETS revenue. In 1980 ETS reported revenue of almost $107 million and assets of $47 million. Even though ETS is not the only producer of standardized tests and the SAT is not the only standardized test used by college admissions officers, ETS and the SAT have received most of the public attention and criticism of standardized admissions tests over the last few years.

Much of the public concern about the SAT has focused less on the test itself (most people remain confident that the test measures something akin to academic aptitude) than on the uses of the test by college admissions officers. Although many Americans believe that the SAT is a national gatekeeper similar to the *baccalauréat* or the Advanced Level GCE exam, neither ETS nor the College Board tells admissions officers how to use the test. Michael Kean, Midwest director of ETS, says: "ETS is not a gatekeeper. The SAT plays a role in admissions selection, in the gatekeeping process, but the term 'gatekeeper' suggests that ETS ultimately decides who is accepted in college. This is simply not true." What is true is that 86 percent of four-year public colleges and 90 percent of four-year private colleges consider standardized test scores an important factor in admissions. Yet

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only 1 percent of four-year private colleges and 2 percent of four-year public colleges claim they consider the scores "the single most important factor." In contrast, an applicant's academic performance in high school is considered the single most important factor in 39 percent of four-year private colleges and 43 percent of four-year public colleges. James Alexander, past president of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, puts these statistics into perspective when he notes: "Admissions officers at selective colleges tend to use a variety of factors to determine who will be admitted. High school performance is the best predictor; the addition of standardized test scores, as well as other factors, will improve prediction. Very few schools will accept or reject a student on the basis of test scores alone."

How this variety of factors to determine admissions works in practice is best shown through examples of particular colleges' admissions procedures. At Princeton University, for instance, 50 percent of the admissions decision is based on academic credentials and 50 percent on nonacademic factors. The academic portion is based on a variety of criteria: grades and rank in high school, SAT scores, achievement-test scores, and recommendations. Nonacademic factors include "leadership activities," school activities, sports, and personal interviews. Special attention is given to students in certain categories: prospective engineers, athletes, minorities, and alumni and faculty children. (James Wickenden, Princeton's director of admissions, admits, "We took forty-five percent of those alumni children who applied, but only twenty percent of all others.") Within this context, the SAT is used as an admission requirement that cuts across all applicants—it is the single unifying measure. A high SAT score does not, however, guarantee admission to Princeton. Less than 52 percent of the applicants for the class of 1984 with SAT verbal scores between 750–800 (the test scores are reported on a 200–800 scale) and less than 39 percent of those with similar SAT math scores were offered admission. Conversely, approximately 18 percent of those with SAT verbal scores between 550–599 and over 19 percent of those with similar SAT math scores were admitted. In fact, a few applicants with verbal and math scores below 350 were accepted. Wickenden concludes, "The SAT scores, while important, are far from being determining factors in the admission process."

At the University of Michigan, the academic part of an applicant's record is most carefully evaluated. Donald Swain, assistant director of admissions, says, "We begin by looking at the academic record of an applicant as reflected by grades on a transcript. We give a little extra weight in our process to those students who have taken honors or advanced placement courses. Consistency of grades and improvement of grades are important factors." Extracurricular activities and recommendations are not strongly considered at Michigan. Alumni children and minorities receive some extra consideration, as do students who come from geographical areas not overly represented at the university. The combined SAT verbal and math scores or the composite ACT score (American College Testing Assessment published in Iowa City, Iowa) are considered important. Swain says:

> We use whatever set of scores is to the applicant's advantage. There is a tremendous range of test scores. In the liberal arts college, where we get many more applicants than we can accommodate, we hold tighter to a grade average or a test range—but there is no cutoff score. Our priority is with students who have done well day by day in class. An application that shows an outstanding record will likely, although not necessarily, counterbalance low SAT scores.

Despite what college admissions officers say about the SAT, many Americans remain convinced that the Scholastic Aptitude Test measures something innate, something akin to inborn academic ability. Although "aptitude" means "a natural or acquired capacity or ability," ETS and the College Board use the term to mean only *acquired* ability. The 1981/82 SAT guide sent to students states: "The SAT measures developed verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities that are involved in successful academic work in college; it is not a test of some inborn and unchanging capacity." Why then the use of the ambiguous term "aptitude"? Rex Jackson of ETS writes: "The SAT is described as an aptitude test because, unlike a traditional achievement test, it is not tied to a particular course of study, and because it is designed to

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assist in predicting future academic performance." The SAT, then, is a test that, despite its dubious title, measures acquired academic ability unrelated to a specific course—and nothing more. It does not purport to measure motivation, creativity, or other traits generally associated with success in college and life.

The SAT is a multiple-choice test composed of four separately timed, half-hour verbal and mathematics sections (each SAT also includes a half-hour Test of Standard Written English and an experimental verbal or mathematics section that is not scored with the others). The two verbal sections of the SAT include antonym, analogy, sentence-completion, and reading questions. The examples that follow are from the 1981 ETS publication *Taking the SAT*, which is available to students.

The antonym questions, designed to test a student's vocabulary, ask the students to choose from among five words the word that is most nearly opposite in meaning to a word in capital letters:

DENOUNCE: (A) overstate (B) acclaim (C) destroy (D) refuse (E) hasten.

The vocabulary that is tested ranges from ordinary words like "ordinary" to difficult—and the critics would suggest esoteric—words like "exculpate," "ebullient," and "vestigial."

The analogy questions are designed to test a student's "ability to see a relationship in a pair of words, to understand the ideas expressed in the relationship, and to recognize a similar or parallel relationship":

YAWN : BOREDOM : : (A) dream : sleep (B) anger : madness (C) smile : amusement (D) face : expression (E) impatience : rebellion

A student's ability to answer many of the analogy questions is less dependent on a knack for recognizing word relationships than on a rich vocabulary, a fact tacitly admitted by ETS in that the analogy scores are reported as part of a "vocabulary subscore." For example, "particle : aggregate," "enigma : mysterious," and "whelp : dog" (three of ten analogies in one SAT section) all present relatively simple, indeed almost simpleminded, word relationships, a point that is obvious only to those who happen to know the meanings of *aggregate*, *enigma*, and *whelp*.

The sentence-completion questions are designed to test a student's ability to recognize the relationships among parts of a sentence. As with the analogies, it helps to have a rich vocabulary:

Although Spalding ---- the importance of the physical necessities of life, her most successful endeavor was the ---- of the condition of the impoverished.
(A) deprecated . . alleviation
(B) emphasized . . investigation
(C) accentuated . . amelioration
(D) epitomized . . delineation
(E) disregarded . . desecration

A typical SAT verbal section includes two or three 300–500-word reading selections from the humanities, sciences, or social studies. The three to five questions following each selection require students to understand, analyze, and interpret what they have read. No prior knowledge of the content is necessary, however; all of the questions may be answered solely on the basis of what is stated or implied in the selection.

The SAT mathematical sections include two types of problems—standard multiple-choice word problems ("If x is a positive integer and $x^2 + x = n$, which of the following could be the value of n? (A) 14 (B) 15 (C) 18 (D) 23 (E) 30") and quantitative comparison questions. The quantitative comparison questions emphasize the concepts of equalities, inequalities, and estimations. Although they generally require less computation than the standard multiple-choice questions, the quantitative comparison questions sometimes confuse students:

$$x + y = 8$$
$$x - y = 12$$

Column A	Column B
y	0

Answer: ***A*** **if the quantity in Column A is greater;**
B **if the quantity in Column B is greater;**
C **if the two quantities are equal;**
D **if the relationship cannot be determined from the information given.**

According to ETS pamphlets, the only mathematical preparation needed for the SAT is a year of high school algebra and some

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geometry. Although this is technically true, the form of the problems, particularly the quantitative comparisons, is quite different from the form of the problems students have experienced in high school classes. Many students become confused by the questions on the SAT; indeed, less than half of the students taking the test are able to answer even half of the mathematics questions correctly.

Between 1963 and 1980, the average SAT mathematics score declined thirty-six points (on the 800–200 scale), from 502 to 466. The average SAT verbal score declined even more dramatically—fifty-four points, from 478 in 1963 to 424 in 1980. (The average scores for 1981, 425 verbal and 468 math, marked the first reversal in this downward trend.) During the 1960s, much of the decline was attributable to changes in the composition of the student group taking the SAT. Students from minority groups who had not traditionally gone to college began taking the test as part of the admissions process. During the 1970s, however, the decline continued, even though the composition of the student group did not change significantly. The statistics showing this second phase of the decline in no way intimated causes for the decline, a fact that has allowed a variety of people to draw their own conclusions about the decline. Indeed, many of the reasons put forth for the decline reflect personal bias rather than informed opinion: decline in modern foreign language study, stress on independent study, "parental coddling," increased encroachment of the courts (including, of course, busing), growing rejection of traditional Western religions and interest in Eastern religions, use of drugs by students, subversive political activities, women's liberation, more married female teachers, and the influx of male teachers into the "female domain" of school. The College Board, in a 1977 examination of the decline, suggested that six general factors, including the changing role of the family, the influence of television, and "the disruption in the life of the country," were at work—a rather grand and long-winded admission that they, too, did not have the foggiest notion about the specific causes of the decline.

Whatever the real causes, the decline itself has directed unprecedented attention toward the SAT. With this attention has come criticism of a surprisingly virulent nature. (Ralph Nader, for example, begins the preface of his study group's report on ETS, *The Reign of ETS*, with, "The conception of this report on the Educational Testing Service began with the *victims* of standardized testing." [Emphasis added.]) Although criticism of the SAT has been offered since the test's inception, the recent criticism has been more widely reported in the popular media. ETS and the SAT have become something of a magnet for criticism of standardized tests and of college admissions.

The College Board and ETS recommend that SAT scores be used as a supplement to students' high school records in the admissions process. This use of the SAT is based on the assumption that it validly predicts first-year college grades. No one at the College Board or at ETS suggests that the test predicts success in college or in life beyond college years. Yet, some critics, notably Warner V. Slack and Douglas Porter of Harvard Medical School, believe that the SAT does not serve even this limited function well. In the *Harvard Education Review* (May 1980) Slack and Porter conclude: "The validity coefficient of the [SAT] tests, together with high school records, is, on the average, only 0.06 higher than that of the high school record alone." Similarly, the Nader report states that the SAT increases predictive ability over high school records alone by only 3 to 5 percent. The College Board and ETS, using different methods, reject both the Slack and Porter and the Nader conclusions. Rex Jackson of ETS states that the improvement in predictability of the tests in conjunction with the high school record over the high school record alone is 27 percent. George H. Hanford of the College Board puts the matter more dramatically: "Thousands of validity studies prove that the SAT increases predictive efficiency by 40 to 50 percent when it is used in *helping* to estimate first-year college grades—not the paltry 3 to 5 percent that Ralph Nader suggests." Because the researchers use different methods—and sometimes different figures—conclusions about the SAT's predictive ability are likely to remain contradictory. The underlying issue, however, is not what the exact percentage of improvement the SAT offers is, but how the scores are used by admissions officers. As we have seen, admissions officers

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at selective colleges tend to use SAT scores as a supplementary factor that cuts across all students regardless of their backgrounds. Used as a counterbalance to the differences in high school curricula and the subjectivity of grades, the SAT scores, admissions officers believe, have a usefulness that transcends the argument about the percentage of increase in predictive ability.

The fact that SAT scores are used to compare students from different backgrounds, however, prompts other criticism. An ostensibly simple fact about the SAT is that the scores of minority students are lower than those of other students. Robert L. Williams, among other critics, makes the point that the scores are not fair standards of comparison because the test discriminates against blacks and other minority students, who are not altogether familiar with mainstream American culture and with standard written English. In an attempt to demonstrate his point, Williams wrote a test called the "Black Intelligence Scale of Cultural Homogeneity" (BITCH). All of the items for the BITCH were drawn exclusively from black experience. When Williams administered the test to blacks and whites, the scoring pattern, not surprisingly, was the reverse of the SAT—blacks had higher scores. Whatever Williams's results might suggest about American culture, it is erroneous to conclude, as Williams did, that because he was capable of creating a biased test, the content of the SAT is therefore biased. Every item on the SAT is checked for bias by minority reviewers—and then checked again. Indeed, anyone familiar with the content of the SAT is aware that there are no items biased against blacks or other minorities. Any items *about* minorities are uniformly positive in nature.

Williams's point about the language of the SAT is more interesting. He is perfectly correct in assuming that the test contains no black slang—or any other slang, for that matter. The language of the SAT is standard written English—the English used in most college classes, required in most college papers, and used in most American businesses. Including nonstandard English on the SAT might help minority students score better, but it would not help college admissions officers determine who would likely do well in college classes, which is, of course, what the test is designed to do. The fact that black students score well on the BITCH suggests that they know black English better than they know standard written English. Blacks and other minorities certainly have a right to their language, but such usage will not likely help them to succeed in selective American colleges or in most businesses.

Statistical evidence concerning SAT scores suggests that the argument about minority discrimination is really an argument about social class in the United States. The correlation between SAT scores and family income, the critics point out, is embarrassingly high. The following table of average SAT scores for 1973/74 seniors does, in fact, show that the mean scores are higher among high income groups.

Student's Score	Student's Mean Family Income
750–800	$24,124
700–749	21,980
650–699	21,292
600–649	20,330
550–599	19,481
500–549	18,824
450–499	18,122
400–449	17,387
350–399	16,182
300–349	14,355
250–299	11,428
200–249	8,639

This information leads some critics to conclude that the SAT is a substantial barrier to equal educational opportunity. Spokesmen for ETS, however, categorically deny this. An ETS pamphlet states as fact that the "use of admissions tests has also contributed to increased access of disadvantaged students to higher education," but fails to muster any evidence to support that assertion.

That students from wealthier families tend to score higher than students from poor families cannot be denied, but it is still somewhat misleading. The use of average SAT scores and median incomes ignores the full range of SAT scores. Many students from the highest income level have low scores, and nearly one-third of the students from the lowest income group (below $6,000) score in the upper half of the total group. Further, most other measures of educational achievement—from reading scores to college grades—show a similar

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relationship between achievement and family income. One should not conclude, however, that wealthy people are more intelligent than poor people. (A dim-witted *Fortune* editorial about the SAT, for example, asked rhetorically, "Are rich people smarter than poor people?" and answered, "Yes, obviously.") Rather, one has to ask what effects poverty has on learning (the SAT, after all, measures acquired ability). Implicit in this question is the assumption that wealthy people also tend to be better off educationally—an assertion that is less than shocking to anyone who has visited a variety of schools. In *College Admissions and the Public Interest*, B. Arden Thresher wrote: "Social class, which we in the United States like to ignore, or take note of only shamefacedly, plays a powerful part in access to education." James Loewen, who would agree with this appraisal, created the "Loewen Low Aptitude Test" that measures "exposure" to working-class life. The test, he says, is "designed to show my urbane white students some of the forms of test bias." And, like the BITCH, it works. Also like the BITCH, however, it, too, misses the point. The SAT test may be "biased" in favor of those "urbane" students who have had "exposure" to high culture and standard written English, but it is exactly this "bias"—in favor of culture and correct English—that colleges should be trying to preserve in our nation. Ralph W. Tyler puts the matter most succinctly: "Putting snobbism aside, the 'elite culture' is an important resource for a democratic society. . . . The scholarly heritage is a great and vital resource which schools and colleges should help students discover and learn to use."

In some ways, the most radical criticism of the SAT is that it is "coachable," that students can raise their scores by taking SAT preparation courses. Until recently ETS and the College Board have denied that coaching could improve scores at all. A 1968 College Board pamphlet, for example, stated, "Changes in scores occur in about the same degree and with the same frequency *whether or not a student is coached.*" A 1977 ETS booklet asserted, "The abilities measured by the SAT develop over a student's entire academic life, so coaching—vocabulary drill, memorizing facts, or the like—can do little or nothing to raise the student's scores." Slack and Porter's survey of published research, a National Education Association study, and a Federal Trade Commission report all flatly contradict these statements. Indeed, an internal FTC memorandum suggested, "The representations of ETS and its clients regarding the susceptibility of their standardized admission examinations to coaching are false, misleading, deceptive." While there is little evidence to suggest malfeasance on the part of ETS or the College Board, there is evidence, some of it from ETS itself, that their earlier statements were incorrect. Recently ETS has begun to hedge on those earlier, unequivocal statements. In a response to Slack and Porter's conclusion that "coaching for the SAT can result in gains in scores," Rex Jackson stated: "In making their case the authors fail to draw clearly the critical distinction between programs of short-term drill and practice designed to yield quick increases in scores, and longer term educational programs designed to have lasting effects." This distinction between education and cramming is echoed throughout recent ETS publications and also by Neal Samors of ETS, who says, "With more schooling, you're likely to increase your aptitude—and your performance in college."

This distinction between long-term and short-term work is, of course, educationally valid, but it still implies that short-term work is futile—an assertion that recent studies and my own experience in tutoring students would suggest is erroneous. Students I have worked with over periods of months have invariably improved their scores, but even some of those whom I have worked with for only short periods of time have improved remarkably. One girl, for example, raised her SAT math score one hundred points after only three hours of tutoring. She had understood algebra and geometry well enough, but had not known how to answer the word problems, particularly the quantitative comparisons, on the SAT. This sort of short-term work on test-taking skills, what some critics call "test-wiseness," is often beneficial to students—a point ETS concedes. In fact, each year ETS publishes a bulletin for students that includes a full practice test and advice on how to answer the various types of SAT questions. The problem is, as ETS spokesmen acknowledge, that most students do not read the bulletin, much less take the practice test.

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Some of the same students, however, do take short-term preparation courses, during which they learn test-taking methods—and subsequently improve their scores.

ETS spokesmen also insist that the mean scores of students taking preparation courses are not significantly higher than the scores of those who do not take such courses. The truth of this assertion is debatable (the NEA study and the FTC report conclude that coaching does help), but even if it were true, it is still deceptive. Just as there is a wide range of scores despite a mean that correlates scores with family income, there is certainly a wide range of scores despite a mean that correlates scores with preparation courses. ETS spokesmen insist that the former range is extremely important, but conveniently ignore the latter range. Many students, among them those who are unfamiliar with test-taking strategies, those who suffer from "test anxiety" (and therefore need to know exactly the kinds of questions they will be asked), and those who are not self-motivated enough to work through ETS bulletins and SAT preparation texts, benefit from short-term coaching—even if general conclusions drawn by ETS suggest otherwise.

The fact that the SAT is susceptible to coaching does not imply that it is a poor test. Students are likely to do better on any standardized test, or for that matter on any test, if they understand the form of the test—if they have developed test-wiseness. Further, the abilities measured by the SAT—critical reading, vocabulary, and mathematical reasoning skills—are, as ETS so insistently points out, *acquired*. One way to develop test-wiseness and to acquire these abilities is to receive coaching. That coaching helps does suggest, however, that those economically advantaged students who can afford preparation courses are likely to improve on the cultural and educational advantages that they already have, an instance of the rich getting, if not richer, then at least brighter. This poses an ethical issue concerning the use of the SAT in the college admission process. Quite simply, the SAT is not quite the unifying factor it seems to be; it cuts differently across various ethnic and economic groups. Again, this does not suggest that the SAT itself discriminates, but rather that certain uses of the SAT by admissions officers at American colleges may be discriminatory. The use of cutoff scores, for example, quite likely discriminates against the poor and minorities, as does the use of the scores to compare students from different economic and cultural backgrounds. But the use of SAT scores as a supplementary item within the context of other admissions factors and the use of scores to compare students from similar backgrounds remain valid, indeed valuable, for admissions officers at selective American colleges. The SAT itself remains, in the words of the College Board charter, a fair, uniform, and judiciously administered exam.

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Hunting for the Hound & Horn

MITZI BERGER HAMOVITCH

The *Hound & Horn* was one of a group of little magazines (so called because of their minuscule readership) that were founded in the second and third decades of the twentieth century to encourage innovative talent that could not be published in conventional commercial magazines. As is well known, many of the great modernist writers—among them T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, and Robert Frost—were first published in these magazines. Because the *Hound & Horn*, an elegant quarterly, was established fairly late in the era of literary experimentalism—its dates are 1927–34—it is not as widely known as the *Dial* and the *Little Review*, to name two of the better-known little magazines, but at its demise the *Hound & Horn* was considered one of the most important literary magazines in America.

As the editor of *The Hound & Horn Letters*, to be published in December by the University of Georgia Press, I found myself caught up in an adventure of the kind that Richard Altick, in *The Scholar Adventurers*, describes in his account of the fascination of scholarly detective work. While organizing and editing the *Hound & Horn* letters for publication, I found myself in the grip of detective-like obsessions as I pored over hundreds of fifty-year-old letters in search of whatever clues might help me to decipher illegible scrawls, decode private symbols, and elucidate arcane references long lost in time. It is this adventure that I wish to report here.

The founding editors of the *Hound & Horn* were two twenty-year-old Harvard undergraduates, Lincoln Kirstein and Varian Fry. Kirstein would later go on to become a poet, critic, and co-director with George Balanchine of the New York City Ballet and president of the School of American Ballet. They named their magazine after two lines in Ezra Pound's poem, "The White Stag":

> 'Tis the white stag, Fame, we're a-hunting
> Bid the world's hounds come to horn!

Irritated by its policies several years later, Pound nicknamed the magazine the "Bitch and Bugle"; Kirstein wrote about this name, "Even up to seven years later confused people would send us advertisements of prize beagles and airedales thinking we were a hunting magazine."

The short stories of Erskine Caldwell, John Cheever, Kay Boyle, Sean O'Faolain, and Katherine Anne Porter (including her classic "Flowering Judas"), as well as the poetry of E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and Marianne Moore appeared in the pages of the magazine. It is absorbing today to browse through the issues of the *Hound & Horn* and encounter Foster Damon's essay on *Ulysses*; Lincoln Kirstein's articles on film and dance; Edmund Wilson's "The Ambiguity of Henry James," his Freudian interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw*, commissioned by Kirstein for the most famous issue of the *Hound & Horn*, "A Homage to Henry James," (April/June 1934); and Richard Blackmur's essays on Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and T. S. Eliot.

Drawings by Picasso and Gaston Lachaise were reproduced in the magazine. The magazine also ran photographs by Ralph Steiner, Charles Sheeler, and Walker Evans, then an unknown photographer whose work was encouraged by Kirstein. Books were reviewed by, among others, Allen Tate, Dudley Fitts, Yvor Winters, and Francis Fergusson, brilliant young men who were just then begin-

MITZI BERGER HAMOVITCH is an assistant professor of English at Queens College, CUNY.

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ning to make their names as writers, scholars, and critics.

Initially a Harvard magazine, the *Hound & Horn* moved, in the winter of 1929, to a small office on East Forty-third Street in New York and began to be marketed in bookstores across the country. It cost forty cents a copy to print and sold for fifty cents. "We lost about eight thousand dollars a year," Kirstein wrote. "If we had ever twenty-five thousand dollars a year to spend we could have made it pay for itself in two and a half or three years, I'm pretty sure."

Varian Fry left the magazine after a "family quarrel," and Bernard Bandler, a recent Harvard graduate and assistant in the philosophy department, became an editor in 1929. The mainstay of the *Hound & Horn* remained Lincoln Kirstein, who, independently wealthy (his father was president of Filene's department store in Boston), could afford to make a career of the unprofitable magazine. But a number of young men came and went as editors, on their way to establishing their names in the world of letters, the arts, academic life, or, in the case of Bernard Bandler, psychiatry. Richard Blackmur was the first managing editor of the *Hound & Horn*. The job allowed him to leave his position as bookstore clerk and to work at his critical essays and poetry; but in 1930 there was no longer money enough to pay him, and he resigned, continuing, however, to write for the magazine. A. Hyatt Mayor and Francis Fergusson were characterized by Lincoln Kirstein as "two of the magazine's chief props," and both became editors in 1930. Mayor left the *Hound & Horn* in 1932 to work in the print department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and later became Curator of Prints until his retirement in 1966. Francis Fergusson has had a distinguished career as professor, literary critic, and scholar. Ezra Pound became the magazine's foreign advisor from his base in Rapallo, Italy, from 1930 to 1931. From 1932 to 1934, Allen Tate, as southern editor, brought agrarian philosophy and the "New Criticism" to the magazine. Yvor Winters, western editor, introduced his own brand of rigorous criticism to the magazine's pages.

Lincoln Kirstein, with typical prescience, saved every scrap of correspondence connected with the *Hound & Horn* and gave the letters to Yale University—Harvard wouldn't take them, he told me—where they are kept in an archive in the Beinecke Library. I learned about the letters quite by accident, during an interview with Kirstein about the magazine for a project on small magazines on which I was engaged. Initially hostile in our discussion—"The *Hound & Horn* is dead! D-E-A-D—DEAD! I never talk about the past"—Kirstein mellowed after an hour's talk about the New York City Ballet, and agreed to let me see the letters at Yale. "Tell Don Gallup [then Curator of American Letters] I sent you," he said, and, as they say, the rest is history. My numerous queries to Kirstein about obscure references in the letters were conducted subsequently—and appropriately enough—by mail.

Before editing the letters, however, I had to get permission for their publication from the writers of the letters or from the executors of their estates. This proved a surprisingly time-consuming job, since it was often difficult to track down their whereabouts. The first letter of permission that came tumbling through the mailbox one morning was from Katherine Anne Porter, whose signature was an elegant green-inked sprawl. Almost every day after that, the permissions came in—from Erskine Caldwell and Stephen Spender, from the executors of the estates of E. E. Cummings, Ezra Pound, T. E. Lawrence, and Marianne Moore, and from the widows of Dudley Fitts, Kenneth Patchen, Edmund Wilson, and William Carlos Williams.

In the arts, Lincoln Kirstein's name is highly regarded, and people were clearly pleased that their letters were being selected in connection with the *Hound & Horn*. Often a writer would add a postscript—"I haven't seen Lincoln in years. Please give him my regards." But on occasion, the permissions were delayed or not directly forthcoming. The late Archibald MacLeish, once a good friend of Kirstein's but then fallen away, was one of the few people who wanted to see their letters. Indeed, it was surprising that more writers did not ask to see their letters, which, written almost fifty years ago, might have contained an indiscretion or two. A number of interesting footnotes to literary history were added in an informal exchange of letters between Archibald MacLeish and me. One such concerned a 1931 letter to Kirstein. MacLeish had written: "You are a writer and a painter

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and you ought not to be an editor because it is a contortionist act to be an editor when you are an artist." In a 1976 letter to me, MacLeish wrote: "You should know that Lincoln's father liked me—why? no idea—and used to ask me in to lunch to talk about whether he should go on funding the *Hound & Horn*. It put me on the spot because I wanted Lincoln to devote himself to his own work and because I didn't like the increasingly prissy pedantic tone of the magazine. . . . I thought Lincoln was the prisoner of his crew and had better scuttle the ship. But though I told Lincoln I never told his father."

Along with granting permission to use her letters, Caroline Gordon, the southern novelist and critic, was forthright in her judgment of Kirstein's departure from the world of small magazines to found a ballet company. "Mr. Kirstein rendered the cause of American letters valuable service when he and Bernard Bandler were editing the *Hound & Horn*. Too bad he 'defected.' He might have rendered still more. Sponsorship of the American ballet seems a little like applying a band-aid to an open wound. It is obvious to an unreconstructed Confederate that the world is now suppurating. Our big cities, as a result of culture poured on from the top, are now almost uninhabitable and all over the country smaller cities are imitating their savageries."

I was particularly pleased to receive one letter of permission. The name "Lawrence of Arabia" evoked in my mind the popular image of the white-robed hero riding his camel over towering sand dunes. I learned that to Kirstein, too, T. E. Lawrence had been a hero. As Kirstein wrote in his book, *The New York City Ballet*: "Much moved by the British tradition of illegitimate or extralegal activity and feudal responsibility, I wrote a short essay [April 13, 1934, *The New Republic*] on Lawrence's life following the Arab revolt, and received a reply from him in retirement." Although he was one of the most idolized men in the 1920s and 1930s, Lawrence was humble and unassuming in his letters in the *Hound & Horn* archive. He answered Kirstein:

> I suggested a meeting out of sheer altruism. If we ever come together you will see that I am human. There ain't any such supercreatures as you would fain see; or if there are, I haven't been lucky enough to meet one. . . . I took a lot of trouble in writing *The Mint* [Lawrence's account of his service in the Royal Air Force] to ram it full of all the feeling I could muster. The R.A.F. was a huge and gorgeous subject. Oh, I meant to make a whale of a book. What came into being was hardly its introduction—and now I don't feel that I'll ever write anything again. It is hard to have learnt so hard how to write—and then to have nothing to write about.

Permissions were not forthcoming from Mrs. T. S. Eliot, Mrs. Ernest Hemingway, and Mrs. Yvor Winters. Though I had only a small sheaf of letters from Eliot, which depicted his interest in 1929 in Irving Babbitt's New Humanist movement, his publisher Faber and Faber wrote me that Valerie Eliot was planning an edition of her husband's letters and therefore did not wish to give permission for the use of any of these letters. Because I had the carbon copies of the letters of the editors Richard Blackmur, Bernard Bandler, and Lincoln Kirstein, I was able to reproduce the sense of Eliot's involvement with the magazine. Two issues in the magazine's first year of publication carried a critical essay on Eliot by Blackmur and a bibliography of his works by Varian Fry. Indeed, the *Hound & Horn* modeled itself for a time on T. S. Eliot's London-based magazine, the *Criterion*, founded in 1922. Eliot contributed an essay on Humanism to the *Hound & Horn* and a poem, "Difficulties of a Statesman," and his letters to the editors convey the qualities of modesty and courtesy for which he has always been noted. Not long ago, Kirstein wrote to me that he had asked Eliot, in 1952, to write the libretto for a ballet, "A Prayer for Dancers"; Eliot said he would think about it, but nothing came of the project.

Apart from the cachet of the Hemingway name, there was little loss in not obtaining permission to use a rather slight letter of his in the archive. But Hemingway had written another letter replying to an article in the *Hound & Horn* by Lawrence Leighton criticizing his work. Its humor was such that Kirstein decided to print it in the magazine. Because I was able to use in my book any material that had appeared in the *Hound & Horn*, there is, after all, a Hemingway letter in the appropriate chapter.

A poignant moment in assembling these letters arose during my meeting with Mrs. Yvor Winters, who is the poet and novelist

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Janet Lewis, in her home in Los Altos, California. I had gone to California on a visit, and, hoping that she would rescind the clause in Yvor Winters's will refusing permission for the use of his letters for twenty-five years after his death in 1968, I had brought with me a packet of forty of her husband's letters. Winters had written two and sometimes three letters a day to Kirstein, hammering away at what he considered the choice of second-rate material for the publication, the dearth of good poetry, the poor judgment of the editors, and suggesting the names of possible contributors for the future. Mrs. Winters graciously invited me to her home, albeit warning me that I could expect no reversal in the decision. It was a memorable scene as she, her son Dan, and his wife, Nancy—with their daughter Melissa playing in the background—sat around the Franklin stove in the living room on that December day, reading letters written years ago, filled with Yvor Winters's crackling opinions, dogmatic judgments, and precise evaluations. Among the judgments that one could question—that T. Sturge Moore was vastly superior to Yeats, that Robert Bridges was a better poet than T. S. Eliot—there occurred the statement that in 1933 the four best poets writing in America under the age of forty were Hart Crane (at times), Allen Tate, Howard Baker, and Winters's wife, whose work was little known because her output was small.

"Mom, did you read what Dad said about your work?" her son asked. "Yes," Mrs. Winters replied, in a bemused tone. "I never knew that. He never told *me* that!" It is gratifying to note today that, at the age of eighty-three, Janet Lewis is still writing fine poetry, that her works are being reprinted, and that she is receiving the recognition she richly deserves. Although she allowed me the right to paraphrase his letters, the loss of the vigor and wit of the originals in paraphrase led me to drop the idea of including an Yvor Winters section in my book.

Another instance of withholding permission had a happier ending. Allen Tate had written more than one hundred letters to Bandler and Kirstein, but because some of his letters to the *Hound & Horn* editors had been printed previously without his permission (letters with whose opinions he now disagreed and which he found it offensive to have had published), he had decided to crack down on any subsequent publication of the *Hound & Horn* letters. Reluctant to accept this rejection and hoping that Tate could be persuaded otherwise, I wrote to him again, requesting that he allow me to publish a carefully selected group of twenty-five letters, and these to be of his own choosing, if he wished. He understood that I had had nothing to do with the earlier fiasco and decided not to punish me for another's error. He allowed me to use fifteen letters—"nothing personal, mind you"—and was most helpful in clearing up some of the mysteries in his letters. "What happened to the projected book *The Lost Tradition*, on Timrod, Poe, Lanier and Hayne as a background to the modern Southerners, Ransom, Davidson, Warren, etc.? I can find no record of it." "Never finished," replied Tate to me. "What about the rare book you discovered, *The Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross*, [a nineteenth-century account of pioneer preachers] by his son, James Ross?" "I lost the rare book!" replied Tate. Tate died not long after I asked him those and other questions, and I remember with gratitude his kindness and generosity to me at a time when his health was failing.

Anybody who writes on the little magazines of the first few decades of this century must confront the towering figure of Ezra Pound, supreme promoter of the arts and press agent for many of the major experimental poets and writers. He was involved in more than a hundred little magazines, as editor, contributor, or advisor. He bombarded Kirstein and Blackmur with letters, urging upon them publication of the work of Louis Zukofsky, Basil Bunting, and Robert McAlmon, but without much success. His explosive and often vituperative letters filled my study with the force of a living presence, and after I had finished working with them, I felt the palpable loss of a vital personality. Despite my own deep distaste for his behavior during World War II, I relished the strongly worded opinions in Pound's letters of the early 1930s: "God eternally damblast a country that spends billions interfering with people's diets and that cannot support a single printing press which will print stuff that people like me want to read; i.e. regardless of immediate fiscal profit." In his special Poundian dialect, he wrote in 1930, "The american short story can just as well develop in portraying the kinds of

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sonvabitch that get elected or appointed to posts in which they can retard or ruin the nation." "Make the bloody freshman do a portrait of his congressman, not of his aunt Jemima."

To work on Pound, one gets in touch with James Laughlin, publisher of New Directions Books and one of the trustees for the Ezra Pound estate. Laughlin evaluates Pound's letters, for there is a charge for their use. In this connection, I recall a letter, written in 1933 by Laughlin, then an undergraduate on the editorial board of the Harvard *Advocate*, to Lincoln Kirstein, editor of the *Hound & Horn*. "How much does Pound charge for a Canto?" Kirstein replied: "I daresay you could get it for nothing except postage—as I remember, I paid Pound for three cantos, one hundred dollars. He would take the same now, or probably less." Because of Kirstein's habit of conservation, *The Hound & Horn Letters* contains the most complete record extant of Pound's typically contentious relationship with a little magazine.

Once the task of obtaining permissions was accomplished, I was free to concentrate on organizing and familiarizing myself with the material. Although there was no problem in dealing with the lives and works of such leading literary figures as Pound, Eliot, Cummings, Williams, Stevens, and others, more difficult was the task of identifying the tantalizing figures and references that entered briefly into the letters to Kirstein or Bandler and then disappeared from the archive forever. Kirstein seemed to have almost total recall of the names I regularly queried him about (I found out later that he had kept a detailed journal of those years). Those whom Kirstein didn't remember, A. Hyatt Mayor did. Who, for example, was Maurice Sachs whose projected article on Jean Cocteau never appeared in the magazine? Part of Cocteau's circle, Sachs had written a lurid memoir, *Witches' Sabbath*, in which, as the dust jacket noted, he told "the extremely frank, literate, and tortured story of an unusual man leading a most irregular life. . . . His life was full of temptations he could not resist: alcohol, stealing, sexual promiscuity." Once I obtained a copy, I could not resist reading the book at one sitting. "He was a formidable conversationalist in the salon," Mayor told me, "but we couldn't use the manuscript he eventually sent us." Maurice Sachs died in the early 1940s, a victim of the Nazis.

There was a letter from Cocteau in the archive. Fascinated by the career of the flamboyant writer, I asked Kirstein why, despite his evident enthusiasm to publish him, none of Cocteau's writing appeared in the *Hound & Horn*. "I was interested," Kirstein replied, "but Bandler thought he was inconsiderable, as I recall."

Sometimes I was able to capture an important event in an eyewitness's vivid account. For example, what was Lincoln Kirstein's outburst at the opening of the Eisenstein movie—referred to in a letter from Katherine Anne Porter? A question to Kirstein brought an elusive reply, but after a visit to Doris Levine Fish, *Hound & Horn*'s amanuensis, and a scanning of Marie Seton's biography of Eisenstein, I was able to write the footnote: "There was a great furore over Upton Sinclair's high-handed editing of Sergei Eisenstein's movie, *Que Viva Mexico!* At the preview of the film, retitled *Time in the Sun*, held at the New School for Social Research, Lincoln Kirstein made a speech of protest, and was forcibly ejected from the showing." Doris Fish described the scene to me. She had accompanied Kirstein to the showing, and recalled, "He was uncomfortable with public speaking as a young man and it took a great deal of courage for him to make his speech. He was red in the face and trembling, but he got through it, before he was thrown out."

I wrote Stephen Spender asking, "Who is the 'Tony' in your letters? And what were the books you kept thanking Kirstein for?" Tony Hyndman was the real name of the "Jimmy Younger" referred to in Spender's arresting autobiography *World within World*, in which he described his homosexual relationship long before the topic could be dealt with candidly in literature. And the books Kirstein had sent him were mostly poetry—by James Agee, Malcolm Cowley, Wallace Stevens (*The Man With the Blue Guitar*), and Horace Gregory. "Kirstein sent you a book on the occult," I wrote Spender. "What was it?" I was asking him to remember back to 1933. "You wrote about the book, 'It seems to me slightly sordid—like the Charing Cross Road—in some way, but that only shows how much prejudice I must overcome to understand it.' " Spender replied that all he remembered about the

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book on the occult was its velvet cover. I wrote Kirstein shortly after that about other matters, and mentioned the book with the velvet cover, not expecting recollection at so slight a hint, but back came his reply: "That must have been G. I. Gurdgieff's *The Herald of Coming Good*. I dare say he never read it. Oh well . . ." Another obscurity unveiled.

Katherine Anne Porter painted charming scenes in her letters to me. In answer to my question about titles of books—"What happened to a novel you were working on in 1933, titled *Many Redeemers*? And a short story, 'Adios, La Primavera' "— she replied:

> It was very good of you to send me this copy of my letter to Lincoln Kirstein when I was still living on the sixth floor of a nice ramshackle old apartment house [in Paris] overlooking a lovely convent garden where I could see the young novice nuns up in the apple trees picking apples and putting them in a basket they had on their left arms, their left hands giving them their hold on the branches by them and their right hand picking out in all directions. Nightingales sang there and the sisters came out regularly with large baskets and cut bushels of green things to eat. I had to climb five long straight flights of stairs to get there, but I still think it was one of the nicest places I ever lived in.

And then she replied, unveiling her artistic perfectionism,

> I was writing a book about Mexico and Mexican politics that I called *Many Redeemers*. I wrote about four chapters of this and decided that it was not any good and destroyed it. About "Adios, La Primavera," I do not remember at all what story that may have been, but I have yet to weed out and destroy or try to finish any number of unfinished stories which I relinquished because I was not doing them as I wished to. I started three novels and I have relinquished and destroyed all of them.

There grew between Miss Porter and me a curious exchange about ballet librettos Lincoln Kirstein had asked her to write but which, in the end, had not proved successful, although she was reluctant to admit it.

> I wrote three ballets, for Alberto Best-Maugard, the artist who was a friend of Pavlova, and she asked him to make her the sets for a Mexican ballet, which was performed in Mexico and in Paris. He asked me to do the libretto and I did. She was delighted with our little ballet. . . . I don't remember anything called *Doomsday* [ballet about Puritan New England discussed with Kirstein in a letter to the *Hound & Horn*] but like editors, the theater people probably have the bad habit of changing the author's title for one more appropriate. I probably accepted the title, if I have written about it. The libretto that I really liked and wished really to have seen in the flesh, as you might say, was the battle between David and Goliath with music by a mediaeval—or perhaps 16th century—composer whose record I had once in Paris in 1934 . . . Adam de la Halle. . . . I seem to remember that I mentioned this to Lincoln, but I may not have. In any case, nothing came of any of it, and I have gone on being a balletomane from then until now sitting happily watching the performance, which is where I probably belong anyhow.

Kirstein shed a little more light on *Doomsday* when he replied to a query of mine, in an offhand way, "As I recall Katherine Anne was sore about something we didn't publish of hers, or about a ballet-scenario she wrote and that I didn't like but I can't recall much of her after 1933 when I knew her in Paris."

There were moments of unexpected good fortune. I had gone to Boston to visit one of the most urbane, literate, and charming of men, Dr. Bernard Bandler, whose enthusiasm for Henry James was largely responsible for the famous issue of the *Hound & Horn* devoted to Henry James. After taping an interview about his editorship, I went to the Houghton Library at Harvard to check on correspondence between Kirstein and E. E. Cummings. I looked up from my letters to see, sitting diagonally across from me, the noted Jamesian scholar, Dr. Leon Edel, riffling rapidly through a batch of Henry James's letters. I introduced myself and told him the nature of my research. "I remember the *Hound & Horn* well," he said. "Particularly the Henry James issue—April/June 1934. Write me if you have any questions." Later, entangled in vague references and Jamesian ambiguities, I did indeed write him, and, in addition to giving me the information I needed, he proffered an important evaluation. "The *Hound & Horn* stimulated an interest in James, and got certain essays written that would not have been written until long after, if at all. It resulted also in Edmund Wilson's key essay—which remains one of the most important essays on James. I was then still in the student stage of my work—and it is my great regret that I was not then qualified to participate in that fine

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symposium. I would have been among those who would have written some of those essays later—and I did."

One of the more fascinating exchanges in the *Hound & Horn* letters is that between A. Hyatt Mayor and Kirstein, with Mayor urging the rejection of propagandistic stories such as one submitted by proletarian writer Mike Gold—"Our detachment is our real virtue and value to this time when detachment has almost perished from the world." Mayor was a brilliant, witty, and wise man, editor of the *Hound & Horn* from 1930 to 1932 and the author of its "Art Chronicle." Although I met with him only twice, our meetings were filled with such warmth and laughter that I felt I had lost a friend when he died in March 1980.

In the *New Republic*, in 1934, Malcolm Cowley had written about the *Hound & Horn's* demise: "The *Hound & Horn* followed no political policy; it tried to be merely a repository of good writing. . . . It died for lack of funds or one might expand this statement by saying that in an age of political unrest there was nobody sufficiently interested in a purely aesthetic magazine to make the sacrifice necessary to keep it alive." In fact, the magazine died because Kirstein had found his vocation in establishing ballet in America under George Balanchine, and funds for the *Hound & Horn* were diverted to the School of American Ballet, the seedbed for the world-renowned New York City Ballet.

The chief force behind the *Hound & Horn* was, of course, always and inevitably Lincoln Kirstein. During the course of our six-year correspondence, Kirstein was invariably informative and helpful, though sometimes prickly, and his aphoristic replies to my questions gave me many quotable notes. In the introduction to *Lincoln Kirstein: The Published Writings, 1922–1977, A First Bibliography*, A. Hyatt Mayor writes: "I might attempt a biography of Proteus, but Lincoln Kirstein . . . he not only writes his poems, he makes them happen. . . . What have we that can transmit the brusque vibrancy of his voice, his energy, his authority? We have his writings. . . . The difference Lincoln has made in American awareness is history."

Because of Lincoln Kirstein's remarkable range of interests, the *Hound & Horn* letters are, I think, a valuable documentation of events in the world of the arts through the late twenties and early thirties. For myself, working in the quiet of my study on these letters, I was in the company of many of the best and most exciting minds of the modernist period in arts and letters in the Western world. A scholar-adventurer can't ask for more.

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Fare Thee Well

Donald Davie

Bideford! Nothing will do
To make the place ring true
To its after-rain luminous presence
That day last summer, so
Precipitous, tempest-whipped
As that summer was to us two,
And as Bideford was also
That day we were there,

But embarkations: faces
Cheese-white in lamplight; lights
Dancing on blackness as
They rock away; oars are shipped,
"Ahoy!" and an answering growl,
And they climb aboard, and the wicker
Basket and bird cage are
Hoist in; and the anchor is tripped.

Make what you will of the figure
Of outward, I cannot afford
To let you go, to unloose you
To that all-leveling
Hardship of ocean. See!
Someone has cast a hawser,
Someone has caught it. Wrapped
On a bollard, it checks, it is gripped.

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Oh it is you I would check.
When it comes to the outward bound,
You are to be outstripped:
Farewell! I am far down the Sound,
Dwindled, my moorings slipped.
Somewhere by Barnstaple Bay
I have embraced you, I turn
Seaward. "Farewell," I say.

Because in the event
The hawser will not be bent
Nor gripped so handily, and
Good-byes will be untoward
In some more sterilized place
Than Bideford, accept
This easy rehearsal; that when
The time comes, we be equipped.

✪ DONALD DAVIE, professor of English at Vanderbilt University, is the author of, most recently, *Dissentient Voice* and *Ezra Pound* and the editor of *The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse.*

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Dorothy L. Sayers

Biography Between the Lines

CAROLYN G. HEILBRUN

DOROTHY L. SAYERS: A BIOGRAPHY. *By James Brabazon. Scribner's. $14.95.*
DOROTHY L. SAYERS: A LITERARY BIOGRAPHY. *By Ralph E. Hone. Kent State University Press. $15. Paper, $7.95.*

For over a decade now, dedicated readers of the works of Dorothy L. Sayers have sought the story of her life in whatever clues presented themselves or could be scrounged up. In 1937 Sayers wrote to her son:

> People are always imagining that if they get hold of the writer himself and, so to speak, shake him long enough and hard enough, something exciting and illuminating will drop out of him. But it doesn't. What's due to come out has come out, in the only form in which it ever can come out. All one gets by shaking is the odd paper clip and crumpled carbons of his wastepaper basket. . . . What we make is more important than what we are, particularly if making is our profession.

But for women something exciting and illuminating may indeed drop out; the world is scarcely replete with models of female achievement. Long before it was known that Sayers had had an illegitimate child, or fallen passionately in love with a scoundrel, or married a neurasthenic veteran of World War I, readers had guessed at the great intelligence, the devotion to craft, and, above all, the sense of vocation that rings, bell-like, throughout her writing. There is some question (to which I shall return) as to whether in the end, as C. S. Lewis guessed, Sayers's devotion to her "proper job" became an excuse for suiting herself; but in the earlier years, the years of the detective novels, her concept of doing one's own work and not someone else's was a powerful idea for women, who had always been persuaded to make someone else their job.

Readers, responding to this sense of vocation, naturally wished to examine the text of Sayers's life. When her heirs—her son, Anthony Fleming, and her agent, David Higham—at first refused an authorized biography, the result was several American biographies, sound but incomplete, and one English one, unsound, unfair, and distressing. Awakened to the problem, her executors commissioned a biography. We now have, in James Brabazon's biography, published in 1981, the story of Dorothy Sayers's life, insofar as a readable and honest presentation of the available facts can offer it to us. James Brabazon has given us, with great clarity and fairness, all the events and dates and as many quotations from the voluminous sources as space allowed. It is a great compliment to his work that its comprehensiveness and honesty enables us to create, from his biography, a life story different from the one he thought to tell.

For, as one of Virginia Woolf's characters observed, it takes fifty pairs of eyes to see round that woman. Today, especially, biographies of women speak to women of their own lives; reading a biography, or writing one, we women write our own biographies between the lines. No longer confined to the erotic plot—the script already written by men for women by which women wait for maturity,

CAROLYN G. HEILBRUN is professor of English at Columbia University. Her latest book is *Reinventing Womanhood.*

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marriage, motherhood, and, above all, for the chance to find their place in the destiny of a man—some women now look for other patterns, for possibilities of adventure, accomplishment, ambition. We seek to know about women whose lives include risk and the desire for individual achievement, as well as love. We have learned, in short, to search the accounts of women for exemplary lives: we need examples of female endeavor.

There is, of course, danger in this attempt. Since no one's life can be really known, since what is recorded or remembered very much depends on chance, as biographers and readers of biography, we all choose among the relics to form the life we want to envision for our subject. Roland Barthes has written that he finds biography offensive because it entails "a counterfeit integration of the subject." Who can deny it? In choosing among biographies, we choose among counterfeit integrations. Perhaps in choosing the lives we lead, we do the same.

Let any woman imagine for a moment a biography of herself based upon those records she has left, those memories fresh in the minds of surviving friends, those letters that chanced to be kept, those impressions made, perhaps, on the biographer who was casually met in the subject's later years. What secrets, what virtues, what passions, what discipline, what fallings-out would, on the subject's death, become lost forever? How much has vanished or been distorted, even in our memories? Most of us tell ourselves stories of our past, make fictions of it, and these narrations *become* the past, the only part of our lives that is not submerged.

James Brabazon, like all biographers, has had to form his biography from what remains. But he has also formed it from his own interpretation of what a woman's life can be. Before discussing his biography of Dorothy Sayers, I ought, properly, to record my own relations to Sayers, my special narration (or version) of her life. It is impossible to overestimate the importance to me of her detective novels, through what should have been, but was not, a time of hope: this phrase, significantly, is used by C. P. Snow to characterize a young man's youth, when all seems possible, and his destiny awaits him if he will but set his feet upon the path. For the young woman, however, for whom the female destiny of flirtation, wedding, and motherhood is insufficient or even unattractive, youth is less a time of hope than a time of uncertainty, at worst a time of depression and a certain wild experimentation among the passions: as though, in watching male passions turned upon oneself, one could distract one's attention from the blunted female destiny. In such a time as this, I read Sayers, and through her wit, or intelligence, or portrayal of a female community and a moral universe, I caught sight of a possible life. Sayers provided a fantasy, of course—all detective novels are fantasies—but at least hers was not the romantic fantasy long prescribed for women.

In 1968, when I had indeed moved into a time of hope, I thought I understood Sayers's unique attractions and tried to capture them in a short essay. I got quite a few facts wrong (Sayers would have frowned with distaste), but I caught, I think, something of the spirit in her work that was evident to those who were drawn to her. Interestingly, some years later I was handed copies of her highly personal letters to a man who had scorned her. (James Brabazon has told the story in the *New York Times*, with the facts only slightly garbled after all these years.) What happened was far too unlikely for Sayers ever to have included it in one of her novels.

A man I did not know came to my office at Columbia University and asked me if I knew that the Houghton Library at Harvard possessed love letters from Dorothy Sayers to John Cournos. I did not know nor, I think, did anyone else outside the Houghton Library. This man had apparently chosen me to receive them because of my 1968 essay. Who he was or how he had acquired typed copies of the letters I did not ask and do not know. He simply handed them to me. The original letters had quite properly been closed to the public; I mentioned these letters to James Brabazon when he was working on his biography but did not show them to him. Copies of the handwritten originals were eventually turned over to him by the Houghton Library with the permission of Sayers's son.

The letters revealed a woman passionately in love, telling the man who had scorned her of a subsequent love affair, the conception and birth of her child, and her acquisition of a motorcycle. They presented a whole new view of Sayers: the troubled woman as op-

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posed to the witty contriver I had previously invented. As I read these letters (I could not be certain they were not forgeries, but I did not believe they were, because the same voice from the novels spoke unmistakenly through them), I conceived a passionate desire to write Sayers's biography. I thought I had begun to understand her as a woman and as a writer. James Brabazon, however, was chosen for the task, and I believe the choice was the right one. He had two qualifications essential, as his work makes clear, for a biographer of Sayers: he is English, with that inherent understanding of a culture that cannot be learned, and he is conversant with and sympathetic to her religious beliefs. Apart from Brabazon's excuses for Sayers's anti-Semitism (to which I shall return) and a few minor quibbles, all my comments on Brabazon's biography are offered as addenda, not criticism. A biography by the first writer to have access to all of a person's papers must meet one absolute criterion: it must present factual material so as to assure the possibility of subsequent, and differing, interpretations. James Brabazon has fulfilled this qualification.

He has used two invaluable sources for his biography, apart from Sayers's letters: the thirty-three pages of an unpublished autobiography, "My Edwardian Childhood," and the two hundred pages of an uncompleted novel, "Cat O'Mary," clearly autobiographical and coinciding neatly with the facts revealed in "My Edwardian Childhood." Brabazon has used these materials in his reconstruction of Sayers's early years. It is of particular interest to a woman contriver of female plots to notice that, although Sayers instructed her son to destroy all her papers, she herself had saved her letters to her parents (these are astonishingly open) and many childish compositions and drawings. Behind this lies, I would guess, not so much an unconscious wish for a posthumous biography (which she apparently did not want, even at an unconscious level) as a hope that she herself might, in her late, more leisurely years, reconstruct her life into a meaningful pattern and perceive within her struggles the outline of a destiny. As it happened, she died very suddenly at the age of sixty-four; happily for us, her son has preserved these materials.

Brabazon begins his biography not with Sayers's birth but with her sense of despair at the age of twenty-eight, when she was, in Brabazon's words, "a virgin and unemployed." We may notice that Brabazon puts the virginity first, but Sayers herself, writing to her parents, complains: "I can't get the work I want." In the list of deprivations that follows she mentions money, clothes, and a holiday—all before the man. Which is to say that I, as a woman, see the story differently from Brabazon but am enabled, by his integrity, to interpret it as I choose. He believes more than do I in the power of the erotic plot, male designed, in the life of an extraordinary woman.

Yet one must hasten to say that Brabazon is far from prejudiced in his presentation. What he has to deal with are Sayers's expressed opinions, and these uphold his interpretations of the events in her life. "For the most part," he writes, "she made the best—and the very good best—of the cards life dealt her." He suspects that Sayers might have been happier had she been pretty, "normally" married, with lots of children, had she not been a lonely, only child; "life robbed her of most of the ordinary human experiences of satisfactory emotional relationships, sexual and parental. No wonder she had to fall back on the intellect." He assumes that Sayers had "a raw deal" in not being "physically attractive and sure of herself in adolescence." In short, he asks for Sayers the accoutrement necessary for the successful enactment of a male-designed script. He recognizes, but does not endorse, the possibility that it is precisely not being sexually attractive in youth that enables women to develop the ego-strength to be creative and ultimately part of the instrumental rather than the expressive world in adulthood.

It is not Brabazon's maleness that leads to his interpretation of Sayers's real and possible happiness. As I have suggested elsewhere, men have long found it less difficult than have women to re-create imaginatively the constraints and pressures of a female life. More women than men biographers endorse the erotic plot for women as fulfilling; more women than men blame women subjects for avoiding a conventional life. And Brabazon is, in addition, right in recognizing that, at least in the last decades of her life, Sayers was deeply conventional.

Yet the early years are what count. Erik

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Erikson, while he concerns himself only with male lives, has helpfully identified the period known as the moratorium, which occurs in the lives of certain gifted persons—Shaw and William James are excellent examples. It is a time when the individual appears, before he is about thirty, to be getting nowhere, accomplishing none of his aims or altogether unclear as to what those aims might be. Such a person is, of course, actually preparing himself for the task that awaits him. For my purposes, Yeats is a clearer example of the opposition that appears between what the individual seems to want and what he or she in fact does to facilitate the as yet unrealized vocation. Yeats, at an even later age than Sayers, might have written that he was without work, money, sexual experience. In a way that seems perverse to many students of his work, Yeats fell in love with an unattainable woman even while desiring sexual love. Before Erikson, we were inclined to search for psychological restraints upon sexual expression. It is perhaps likelier that Yeats was providing himself with that experience essential to the poet he sought to become and that he lived the life suited to his vocation rather than to what he consciously recorded as his desires. I would suggest that there is a similar moratorium in Sayers's life. Loving an unobtainable man, rocketing from one unsatisfactory job to another, she was creating for herself a life sharply distinguished from the "normal" life of a young woman of her time. The constant sense of marking time and of lacking a goal, the love of a cad, the affair with the man who fathered her child, the secret birth and maintenance of that child—this was the fiction she was creating for her life, even as she appeared to be wasting time and suffering from profound frustration.

None of this is to suggest anything wrong or mistaken in Brabazon's interpretation; it is only to suggest that, with highly gifted women, as with men, their failure to lead the conventional life, to find the conventional way early, may signify more than the fact that they have been dealt a poor hand of cards. It may well be the forming of a life in the service of a gift or talent, felt but unrecognized and unnamed. This condition is marked by a profound sense of vocation, with no idea as to what that vocation is.

We can guess now that it was essential to Dorothy Sayers's sense of vocation that she put beyond reach the temptation of the conventional woman's life. By becoming pregnant at a time when that was (as it was to remain in Sayers's mind always) a great sin, by pouring out her love to a man incapable of receiving it, Sayers assured herself her strange independence. The letters to Cournos are particularly revealing of both her despair and the hints she seemed to catch of the possibilities that lay ahead. Brabazon is correct in discerning in Sayers a great desire for sexual experience: she wished not only to be desired but to achieve orgasm. In the largely unsatisfactory man who eventually became her husband, Sayers found both sexual satisfaction and independence. That Sayers's husband, Oswald Atherton Fleming ("Mac"), was damaged in the war made for his unhappiness but not hers, in a profound sense. We may even surmise that his refusal to allow her child to live with them suited, at some unconscious level, her own needs. Fulfilling the role society has assigned to the male more than Mac did, Sayers paid for her son's care, supervised his education, and went about her "proper job." Brabazon cleverly guesses that Mac, whatever his failings, was, at least in the early years of their marriage, good in bed.

Sayers's attitude toward her appearance in her later years confirms the sense that, once her moratorium was passed, she was free to disdain those efforts of dress, cosmetics, and hairdressing that had always caused her undue effort and dissatisfaction. The sense of conforming to the ideals of attractive womanhood is one that sustains many women in our culture as they grow older. To "let oneself go" is to resign one's sense of oneself as a woman, and therefore as a person. Women are, of course, rightly involved with their physical attractiveness, but for that reason it requires great courage to ignore one's appearance and reach out, as it were, from behind it to attract and spellbind; it also requires great talent. Ralph Hone has quoted in his biography (Brabazon does not) Mary Ellen Chase's account of Sayers's appearance in 1934, when she was only forty-one:

> There can be few plainer women on earth than Dorothy Sayers, and the adjective is an extremely kind one. She seemingly had no neck at all. Her head appeared to be closely joined to the regions

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directly between her shoulder blades in back and her collar bone in front. She had a florid complexion, very blue, near-sighted eyes, and wore glasses which quivered. Her thinning hair rarely showed evidence of care or forethought in its total lack of arrangement. . . . She was large, rawboned, and awkward.

Yet Chase—the woman frightened of unconventionality yet recognizing, perhaps even envying, the ultimate appeal—adds: "Just as I have never seen a less attractive woman to look upon, I have never come across one so magnetic to listen to." There were times when Sayers, even in the late years, got herself up to look quite handsome. But can it be doubted that for a woman to grow fat in middle age is to disassociate her personhood from her feminine appeal? As Sayers was to write about women wearing trousers, answering men who criticized this unbecoming practice: "If the trousers do not attract you, so much the worse; for the moment I do not want to attract you. I want to enjoy myself as a human being."

All the same, one must be careful, as some writers on Sayers have not been, to recognize that she was not unattractive in her youth. Brabazon indicates that if she never qualified as sexually attractive, she had plenty of vitality and appeal, and received offers of marriage. She had a slender neck in those days, and was "long and slim." What she wanted then was "a man to her measure," someone she could fight with and not intimidate. Of course, she found no such man who would have enabled her, she said, to "put a torch to the world." She put a torch to the world by inventing him.

Brabazon is surely right in asserting that it is the creation of Lord Peter Wimsey, and the works in which he appears, through which Sayers has given the greatest pleasure and will be longest remembered. Even in the genre of the detective novel, Sayers's one work without Wimsey, *The Documents in the Case*, for all its virtues, lacks the appeal of the Lord Peter stories: the absence of the moral complexity that Wimsey insured is sadly felt. High intelligence as a protagonist and the ability to appreciate the inherent complexity of moral decisions are, together with his upper-class manners, what make Lord Peter appealing to so many readers. Intelligent readers like encountering, in fiction, characters as intelligent as themselves, and more erudite.

It has often been said, of course, that Sayers created Lord Peter as the ideal man and then fell in love with him. This, if true, is only partially so. It would be more accurate to say that she created him as an ideal human being, with a feminine sensibility and the male chance for action. Only when he was well established could she, like God, create a woman, Harriet Vane, to bring him comfort, love, and eventually (alas) willing subordination. Harriet Vane has much in common with Sayers, most of all the intelligent woman's inability to find a man worthy of her love. In writing *Gaudy Night*, the novel she had prepared herself all her life to write, Sayers had completed her task of transforming the detective story and embodying her vision of intellectual integrity.

Having done so, she turned, at about fifty, to another career. So, in another fashion, did Virginia Woolf, who, having in *The Waves* written the culminating work of her first art, turned to something more political. (By political, I mean that which hopes to have a palpable effect upon the world and its institutions.) While Woolf and Sayers had little enough in common, they shared the dubious honor of being chosen by Q. D. and F. R. Leavis for passionate attack. Unlike Woolf, Sayers believed the work of her late years to be the destined work of her life: she viewed Wimsey as the financial ground upon which her religious dramas and translations of Dante rested. We may guess that she was wrong in this; her turn to another realm of endeavor more closely resembled the male pattern of a second, less desperate career following success. But all of these around-age-fifty switches have in common the search for a career of generativity rather than stagnation. Some of her readers—myself among them—feel unsympathetic to the tight creed toward which she consecrated her late talents; others welcome her lucid expression of the religious ideas they find adumbrated in the detective novels. But all recognize the important rebirth at the end of life.

Once one has expressed admiration for Brabazon's biography, and regretted the material he could not possibly have included, short of producing a thousand-page book, there remain only a few questionable matters. The

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first is minor enough: his decision to refer to his subject throughout as "Dorothy." It was the name by which he addressed her during their brief acquaintance; nonetheless, "Sayers" would have been preferable and in keeping with modern usage. (Certain men have a problem here: for example, Gordon Ray, who, throughout his study of Rebecca West and H. G. Wells, calls her Rebecca and him Wells.) One regrets, also, the lack of emphasis on Sayers's friendships with women. Apart from denying that these intense, and intensely intellectual, friendships were lesbian (but Brabazon does not deal with Sayers's great defensiveness on this subject), he explores too little one of the most compelling phenomena of her generation. For the first time, but not for long, young women in England, graduating from the universities, experienced friendship according to the male model, where the intention is to enter the power structure, to become productive, and to encourage and support one another. Brabazon recognizes Sayers as a brilliant correspondent and hopes for an edition of her letters. Certainly her letters to women friends would make a valuable contribution to a general history of those English women who flourished so grandly between the two world wars, in one of feminism's most vibrant periods. Unfortunately, Brabazon devotes too little analysis to Sayers's feminism.

Probably the most glaring flaw in Brabazon's biography is his complacent acceptance of Sayers's anti-Semitism, which, expressed mainly in private letters, need not have been so ardently defended. Brabazon excuses Sayers on the grounds that she knew Jews who refused to "learn the common school code of honour." Leaving aside our knowledge today of where that school code can lead, do we not now know that the essence of racial and religious prejudice is to judge a whole group from a few examples of bad behavior? That Sayers actually knew or heard of Jews who behaved badly hardly seems the whole point. Also, Brabazon does not mention Sayers's perfect relations with her publisher, Victor Gollancz, a Jew (though later a convert to Christianity), or the effect upon her of the fact that Cournos was a Jew. Sayers, in fact, disliked the Jewish religion because of its refusal to recognize Jesus as the savior. Sadly, Brabazon, who finds Sayers's tirades against the BBC regrettable because he has worked with the BBC, can only excuse her harshness toward Jews.

Interestingly enough, the American Baptist minister Ralph Hone, author of *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Literary Biography* (1979), is more perceptive on many of these points than Brabazon. He understands Sayers better as a woman and as a feminist and as an anti-Semite. He notices, as Brabazon does not, that Sayers's German governess, whom she kept in touch with and helped after the war, was a Nazi. Hone quotes many of Sayers's feminist views, particularly her wonderful account of the Church's attitude to the story of Martha and Mary. His biography is in no way as complete as Brabazon's, since he did not have access to the family papers, but he has understood Sayers with a certain instinctive sympathy, combined with training in the analysis of literary texts. His biography should be read together with Brabazon's, though there is inevitably much repetition between them. Hone fills in what Brabazon, for reasons of space, excluded—for example, Val Gielgud's report on his interview with Sayers just before her death: "She was positive, as only an inherently shy person can be. And behind a facade occasionally forbidding there was an immense friendliness." Suddenly, one understands so much.

As Sayers grew older and became famous, the necessity of loving one's work became her unremitting watchword. She spoke often of the sense of joy in work that has overmastered one. Certainly this idea is particularly important for those women who must find the courage to resist a lifework that society commends but the soul rejects.

But as Sayers moved into her Christian work, she tended to use the need to love her work as an excuse for avoiding unwelcome tasks. C. S. Lewis wrote to her: "Of course one mustn't do *dishonest* work. But you seem to take as the criterion of honest work the sensible *desire* to write—the itch. That seems to me precious like making 'being in love' the only reason for going on with marriage. In my experience, the *desire* has no constant ratio to the value of the work done." Brabazon suggests that Sayers confused what she ought to do with what she felt like doing. Similarly, today, women who find the courage to pursue their "proper job"—in academia or in the

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professions or businesses newly opened to women by the efforts of feminists—eschew any support of other women with the excuse that their proper job is being a lawyer, or whatever it might be; thus they avoid their part in the hard and painful task of changing society's restrictions on women.

The importance of much of Sayers's later religious work is indisputable. Her comments on Dante, I have been told, are original and incisive. Her *Mind of the Maker*, as lucid as it is filled with insight, describes her experiences in the writing of detective fiction, to illuminate her analysis of acts of creation by God and by human beings. Her dramas and her translations are, perhaps, less likely to last. As to the Wimsey books, these will endure for the reasons books do endure: because they give pleasure and because, beneath their glittering surface, they question the society they portray. It is easier to be an apologist for a society than a subtle subverter of it.

In 1943, Sayers turned down a Lambeth Degree, a rare honor bestowed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who offered her a Doctorate of Divinity. Because her letters to the Archbishop have not been released, Brabazon can only guess at her reasons for refusing this great honor, but his guess is a sound one: she was aware of personal sinfulness in her son Anthony's birth, and afraid that the fact of his birth might be ferreted out. We, who now know all the facts, may well decide that it was in her sinfulness, rather than in her preaching, that her true destiny as a woman is revealed.

Kleist's Kant Crisis

AN ABYSS DEEP ENOUGH: THE LETTERS OF HEINRICH VON KLEIST WITH A SELECTION OF ESSAYS AND ANECDOTES. *Edited and translated by Philip B. Miller. Dutton. $16.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT LEITER

Heinrich von Kleist, who is far better known and more highly revered in his native Germany than elsewhere in the world, led a short and incomparably tragic life. Born Bernd Heinrich Wilhelm von Kleist in Frankfurt an der Oder on October 18, 1777, he was the son of Joachim Frederick von Kleist, a captain in the Prussian army, and his second wife, Juliane Ulrike.

Kleist's parents died when he was a young boy; and his private education came to an end when, as was the custom among families of the nobility, he entered army service. In his early teens he saw action during the Rhineland campaign against the revolutionary armies of France. But life in the military did not suit his erratic and delicate nature. He loved music, played the clarinet with talent, and was an avid student of mathematics.

Several of the early letters in *An Abyss Deep Enough*, a judicious and informative edition of the correspondence, tell of Kleist's insistence upon formulating a "life plan." The supreme goal of life, Kleist argued, was to seek happiness. This was, in fact, the sacred duty of individuals devoted to Enlightenment ideals. Knowing that he could not achieve happiness in the military, Kleist resigned his commission in 1799.

Returning to Frankfurt an der Oder, he enrolled at the university and began studying physics and mathematics, history and Latin. In 1800 he made the acquaintance of Wilhelmine von Zenge, the daughter of the local garrison commandant, and, quite on impulse, became engaged to her. But, almost simultaneously, he set off on a series of journeys, the first of which took him to Leipzig and Dresden, and then to Würzburg, where he submitted to some sort of medical treatment. Much mystery surrounds this event, which has become the source of endless critical and academic speculation. Some say that Kleist was treated for venereal disease, others that he was circumcised. There are no clues to be had in the letters of the period, but Kleist does insist that his Würzburg stay made him "worthy" of his fiancée.

Soon after, he tried settling down in a civil post, but this lasted only a few months. Then came the famous "Kant crisis," which Philip B. Miller, the editor and translator of *An Abyss Deep Enough*, calls "perhaps the most notorious emotional crisis in German literary history." In a letter dated March 22, 1801, Kleist wrote to his fiancée:

> I recently became familiar with the more recent so-called Kantean philosophy, and I may impart one of

ROBERT LEITER's work has appeared in the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, *Commonweal*, *Dissent*, and many other journals.

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its leading ideas to you without fear of its shattering you as deeply, as painfully as it has me. . . .

If everyone saw the world through green glasses, they would be forced to judge that everything they saw *was* green, and could never be sure whether their eyes saw things as they really are, or did not add something of their own to what they saw. And so it is with our intellect. We can never be certain what we call Truth is really Truth, or whether it does not merely appear so to us. If the latter, then the Truth that we acquire here is *not* Truth after our death, and it is all a vain striving for a possession that may never follow us into the grave.

Ah, Wilhelmine, if the point of this thought does not strike you to your heart, do not smile at one who feels himself wounded by it to his most sacred inner being. My one, my highest goal has sunk from sight, and I have no other.

Many writers have noted how completely Kleist misunderstood Kant. No one is certain just what works Kleist read, but it is apparent that the crisis was brought on by Kant's epistemological theories. In their introduction to the Penguin edition of Kleist's stories, David Luke and Nigel Reeves write:

> Kant had demarcated the limits of human knowledge not in order to undermine confidence in man's rational faculty or strengthen the case for atheism: on the contrary he had intended to clarify the true foundations for religious belief, to show what was properly beyond empirical exploration and therefore a matter of faith, not of knowledge.

Kleist, however, believed that he could no longer differentiate between appearance and reality. A "life plan" was worthless. The crisis left him, in the words of Michael Hamburger, "at the mercy of Energy divorced from Reason."

But the crisis also transformed him into a writer. He made a complete break with Wilhelmine, traveled through Germany with his stepsister Ulrike, and settled for a time in Switzerland. And through it all he wrote the now famous stories and plays.

In his lifetime all but a few of his literary endeavors met with disaster. Much of the blame lies with Goethe, who completely misunderstood the young writer. Goethe refused to give Kleist's literary journal *Phoebus* his approval and it soon ceased publication. He did produce and direct Kleist's *Broken Jug* at his Weimar theater, but he also insisted that this seamless farce be played in three acts, thereby destroying the work's unity and ensuring its failure. And when Kleist sent Goethe his play *Penthesilea*, Goethe was so repulsed by the strange mixture of emotions in the work that he burned the manuscript.

Kleist's final years were marked by repeated failures and an ever-deepening depression. He had founded and published Berlin's first daily newspaper, the *Berliner Abendblätter*; but after a time he was not permitted to print certain stories, and the paper went out of business, leaving Kleist with major financial difficulties. The final blow came when the first performance of his last and finest play, *The Prince of Homburg*, was suppressed.

At the age of thirty-four, after an astonishing period of creativity, he entered into a suicide pact with Henriette Vogel, a married woman who was dying of an incurable disease. There seems to have been no sexual relationship between the two of them. Rather, Kleist saw in Mrs. Vogel an otherworldly presence, someone who, like himself, longed for death. In a letter to his stepsister Ulrike, he wrote, "If Heaven would grant you a death half as full of joy and inexpressible serenity as my own, it would fulfill my most heartfelt and sincere wishes for you."

The pact was executed on November 22, 1811, beside Lake Wannsee near Potsdam. Kleist first shot Mrs. Vogel and then placed the loaded revolver into his mouth.

The importance of these letters cannot be overstated. But the book does pose several problems, at least for the general audience. The early letters, especially those to Wilhelmine, are a mixture of youthful earnestness, romantic ardor, and incessant pedantry. Whenever he wrote to Wilhelmine, Kleist would adopt the role of pedagogue. Wilhelmine, a mere female, needed to be molded. He corrected her grammar, told her what books she was to read, and suggested subjects for essays she might write. All of this is difficult to wade through, even for an ardent admirer of Kleist.

After the Kant crisis and the break with Wilhelmine, the Kleist of the letters begins to resemble the Kleist we know from the stories and plays. Still, the personality that emerges from *An Abyss Deep Enough* is not a pleasant one. It was Goethe who wrote: "With the best will in the world toward this poet, I have

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always been moved to horror and disgust by something in his works, as though here were a body well-planned by nature, tainted with an incurable disease." And it was Mann, for all his praise of Kleist, who noted that the "image rests on a true perception." The letters, which chart the wild vacillations in Kleist's nature, make this even clearer.

Although there was much in Kleist's life that was excessive and often silly, his writings are free of the extremes of personality that color the letters. For many reasons an American audience may never see an adequate production (in English) of any of the plays. But while reading works like *The Broken Jug*, *Amphitryon*, and *The Prince of Homburg*, one is struck by how lean and uncluttered they are. Michael Hamburger has pointed out that Kleist avoided any device that postponed the action of his plays. He dispensed with introductory scenes and explanatory soliloquies, both of which were the conventions of the time.

And in the stories Kleist could achieve the complete dissolution of his personality. (This is an idea expressed in Kleist's famous essay "On the Puppet Theatre," which Miller has included along with a generous sampling of Kleist's anecdotes, works greatly admired by Kafka.) Kleist's typical narrative stance is self-effacement. In his literary work he could speak without stammering or blushing, as he apparently did when venturing into society.

Nothing in Kleist's works is as it seems, and it is this uncertainty that gives them their modern edge. What he believed to be Kant's refutation of complete knowledge came to inform all his writings. The stories—from the well-known *The Marquise of O* to *The Foundling*—still retain the power to startle even the most jaded reader.

And so a caveat must be offered, at least for the reader unfamiliar with Kleist. To understand the importance of these letters, one must first read the plays and stories. Kleist's short, miserable life, filled with excess and disappointment, is fully documented in *An Abyss Deep Enough*. But it is only part of the story. As his epitaph reads:

> He lived and sang and suffered
> in dreary, difficult times.
> Here he sought death
> and found undying fame.

And Is There Honey Still for Tea?

THE STRANGE DESTINY OF RUPERT BROOKE. *By John Lehmann. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $12.95.*

Reviewed by SONYA RUDIKOFF

It may be late to speak of Rupert Brooke, but no one who was educated in England or America since the First World War can claim to have read him late. "If I should die, think only this of me" came early, before the encounter with sophisticated teachers and advanced poetry. And even though this poem, "The Soldier," talks about "some corner of a foreign field / That is forever England," it could quite easily be accommodated to "We Gather Together," Governor Bradford and "the ravages of the savages," the swords into plowshares, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the school song sung to the tune of Brahms's First. Brooke died in what was once called the Great War, but his poetry did not have to wait for discovery and applause. No flower born to blush unseen, Brooke saw himself early as a poet and a figure in the great world. His mentor and sponsor, Edward Marsh, was Churchill's private secretary and made sure that Brooke met the Asquiths, the prominent Liberal peers and politicians, Lady Eileen, Winston and Clemmie. Brooke's death in 1915 occurred on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, which is also Saint George's Day and the day when Shakespeare is supposed to have died. Just a few weeks earlier, the dean of Saint Paul's had quoted "The Soldier" in his Easter Sunday sermon. After solemn burial on a Greek island, mourned and eulogized so that his death seemed not a waste but a triumph, Brooke soon came to be seen not merely as a poet but as a figure out of Frazer's mythology.

The process was amazing because it developed naturally, not as a contrivance of publicity agents, even though Brooke's fellow officers felt at the time that they were participating in the creation of a myth. In these seven decades, however, we have seen the

SONYA RUDIKOFF, advisory editor for the *Hudson Review*, is currently working on a study of Virginia Woolf and language.

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growth of the media and the perfection of "hype" on a scale that could hardly have been imagined then. What once might have seemed like excessive adulation, mythicizing, and lionizing has become in our day a highly sophisticated operation, the product of a publicity industry using as its material and its agents the celebrity culture all around us. We are now so practiced in receiving and resisting the relentless messages of that industry that we can hardly conceive of the innocent credulity that greeted Brooke's story and has engaged friends and enemies ever since. John Lehmann, the British poet, publisher, and editor, was twenty years younger than Brooke, too young to have known him, although their worlds overlapped. Lehmann was associated with Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press and has long been a dedicated sponsor and spokesman for new poetry. In his book, *The Strange Destiny of Rupert Brooke*, Lehmann does not attempt to revise the general views of Brooke's poetry or champion him as a war poet. Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen, and Siegfried Sassoon are still the more accomplished poets of that war, and Brooke is still the poet of possible promise, although Lehmann believes that he had great abilities, that he wrote some good poetry, and that he might have dispatched the myths about himself. In this discussion, Lehmann is intent, rather, on disentangling some of the clotted attributions and claims that he thinks obscure the subject of Rupert Brooke's poetry.

Brooke's contemporaries were T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, but he is not among them in our minds today; indeed he seems quite distant from that spirited, inventive world of prewar art and thought. Perhaps this is the reason why Lehmann's effort to set the story straight may need a more general intellectual justification than he provides. Brooke's poetry, apart from the war sonnets, is not well known. He was a prolific letter writer in those early days when the telephone was used as a mechanical aid, not a social instrument, but his letters are less interesting than those of Woolf or Lawrence. An early advocate of the simple and natural, he disdained meat and tobacco, loved camping, living out of doors, and nude bathing in the river, but he has not been claimed as one of nature's advocates. He wore long hair and dressed in corduroys and work shirts, without a tie, at a time when even for picnics the informal style decreed coats and ties. He was iconoclastic and irreverent, but he isn't regarded as the precursor of anything; he was more like the end of something. His very deliberate candor and mockery of pretensions, his nakedness of spirit that affronted what remained of late Victorian convention, his Fabianism, his energetic simplicity—all have been superseded or swept away by the legend of the soldier-poet.

By now, of course, the mention of Rupert Brooke no longer has the power it once did, and Frances Cornford's "young Apollo, golden-haired" has almost no reality. "Dining Room Tea," "The Old Vicarage: Grantchester," and some of the "unpleasant" poems suggest that Brooke shared the experience and some of the feelings of Eliot. Had he lived, he might have shared Eliot's effort to make poetry out of contemporary speech.

Brooke's story involves many people, places, and social groups—in Dorset, Berlin, Cambridge, Munich, Cannes, Hampstead, The Hague, Rugby, Cornwall, Grantchester, and London—all as they were before the lights went out in Europe. The background against which he wrote was the seemingly endless, unfragmented garden party, which continues to haunt that country of deep meadows, immortal rivers, mills, church clocks, and honey for tea. Other ghosts are unquiet too: it was the home of the industrial revolution, of the dark satanic mills, of the dole, of the Empire, of Marx and Engels watching and writing, of feminists, of poor-law reform, of the classes and masses. The war of the Brooke legends in this context might have furnished an absorbing exercise in social history. Lehmann's interest lies elsewhere, however: he neither engages these themes, nor has he unearthed some mute inglorious housekeeper's record of what went on at the reading parties in Dorset or Cornwall, where the friends from Cambridge would gather, often with some young women from Newnham and Bedales. Rather, he relies mainly on unpublished letters to retell and reconstruct one of those reading parties in a crucial period in Brooke's life, at the end of 1911, when he apparently suffered a breakdown and was never quite the same again. A little over three years later he would be dead off the coast of Gallipoli.

In 1911 Brooke was embroiled in several

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confused relationships with several young women and with friends from Cambridge; he was also disturbed by the behavior of some people from London who had joined the reading parties. Like many such informal gatherings of advanced young people in their twenties, there were among them explicit emotional dramas and hidden counterplots, feelings both expressed and unexpressed, scenes of jealousy and desire, brooding accusations and despairing hopes. Brooke came to Dorset in an uneasy and fragile state, and in the year that followed, his personal relationships were tumultuous, disordered, unsatisfactory, and exhausting. He was taken to see Dr. Craig, the respected "nerve specialist." He wrote innumerable letters during this time, as did many of the participants, so the events can be followed in minute detail. Although the crisis apparently was resolved later in 1912, Brooke's suspicions and resentments did not subside. He developed justifications for them, fled to America, and then came back to England in the summer of 1914. The famous war sonnets were written later in that year, but he had already written quite a lot of poetry before then.

Lehmann's careful attention to what happened during those few days at Lulworth Cove, Dorset, in December 1911, followed by what happened in Cannes, Paris, Munich, or on the Starnbergersee, and in Brooke's remaining three and a half years of life, will certainly interest those readers already knowledgeable and concerned about this poet's fate, already familiar with alternative versions of the story and with the subsequent unrolling of all the separate lives once so entangled. Whether Ka Cox did wrong in telling Rupert something, whether Lytton Strachey actually contrived mischief, whether James Strachey conspired or betrayed, whether Henry Lamb intended to deceive, are all matters of importance in clarifying a brief intense history. Readers less involved, or looking for general ideas, may find this close scrutiny of events less rewarding. When Brooke recovered from his crisis, he rejected some of his Bloomsbury and Cambridge friends and embraced a new set of friends, becoming dizzily immersed in lunches, dinners, weekends, flirtations with great ladies, and appearances in Downing Street. Some of Brooke's critics feel that the new friends did him no good, but instead separated him from the tolerant, agnostic, intellectual, liberal, and bohemian world where he really belonged. Others think the new friends encouraged Brooke's sense of reality. Lehmann says little about the question of homosexuality that has always hovered over the Brooke story, except to hypothesize that Brooke might have thought that Lytton Strachey, actively homosexual, doubted the genuineness of Brooke's interest in women and plotted against him. To support this hypothesis, Lehmann adduces Brooke's girlish complexion and good looks and a single homosexual episode that Brooke reported as occurring in 1909, which is given no more weight or emotional context than if it were a report of trying an exotic unconventional food. This dimension of experience is not explored in its connection with other, later themes in Brooke's life, or with his breakdown, or, indeed, with his poetry's images, themes, or locutions.

Brooke's entrance into the great world seemed to coincide with his adoption of conventional patriotic sentiments, which he expressed in the language of late Victorian pomposity and jingoism; his letters indicate a violent hatred of intellectuals, pacifists, and feminists; he was excessively "English," illiberal, anti-Semitic. When he became a soldier, he assumed the harsh posture characteristic of his last year—"grown up," he called it—full of brusque devotion, increasingly dedicated to his men and to his battalion, identifying his own needs with the war aims of England. It was like being Head of the House again for him and for some of his fellow officers, one-time prefects at Eton, Harrow, or Rugby, seduced by the dream of the sixth form and its trappings of authority, and willing to be brutalized for the dream. Brooke's earlier letters had been playful, showy, and posturing, with a self-consciousness and attitudinizing that frequently chills the reader with its knowing manipulation of consequences. He observed how he affected others, he posed, he flirted, he inflamed others' feelings but tried not to get singed himself. The posturing self spawned one of the legends, the death-intoxicated soldier-poet another, each drawing back from the chaos of the breakdown. His old friends deplored what the new friends made of him, and when the new friends adopted his poetry for patriotic uses, the old friends pre-

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ferred their own legend of the charismatic young man who could have been anything in the world; they even denied that it was his poetry that made him valuable. What none of them acknowledged, despite his telling them, was that his own despair and inner sterility made him ready for death long before death actually found him. If everything were legendary, Brooke should have died beautifully and heroically in battle while saving comrades. This was not to be. Instead, on the ill-fated Dardanelles expedition, he developed blood poisoning, which started with an infection on his lip.

Such legends, such efforts at mythicizing, can always be unpacked and dismantled, but is there anything new to be said? Can anything be salvaged for general use? The very mythicizing has its late Victorian roots and reasons, of course. The elegiac accommodation of individual histories was available then as an emotional and poetic convention to be assumed in public and private for celebrating the lives of innumerable young men. It had been employed for Hallam and Clough; it would be employed for others. For example, Brooke's contemporary, Julian Grenfell, another soldier-poet—"radiantly happy" when he died of wounds, uttering as his last words "Phoebus Apollo" and his father's name—was invested with something from the same fund of glory. Those who would mourn John Cornford, Julian Bell, and Ralph Fox, after their deaths in the Spanish civil war, would call upon this elegiac tradition, as would so many others later in the Second World War. (John Cornford's first name was Rupert. Bell had been named for Julian Thoby Stephen, another "radiant" one cut off in his youth.)

The death wish expressed in Brooke's war sonnets suited those who needed to connect the sacrifice of life with the patriotic feelings of heroes throughout history, and especially with the love of country offered by England's great poets. It was essential to evoke such sentiments in heightened language. Brooke's school, Rugby, put up a plaque in its chapel showing his beautiful profile, with "The Soldier" carved in marble by Eric Gill, reaffirming that Dr. Arnold's school still knew how sweet and fitting it was to die for one's country. Brooke's classical education there can be tracked everywhere in his poetry; but Donne and Webster, too, might have noted how "that rich earth a richer dust concealed," and how that "dust," like some magical phosphorescent substance working in the earth, would continue through the ages to give back "the thoughts by England given."

Love of country, that sentiment and spur to action cherished through the ages, has more often been thought ignoble, mindless, or monstrous, especially after the Great War turned into the bleak butchery of trench warfare. The natural revulsion that patriotism has evoked ever since can itself be united to the myth, just as Brooke's accidental death, in an absurd and costly military miscalculation, adds another wrenching message about the wasteful deaths of war. Brooke's (and others') enthusiasm and gaiety in joining up must be integrated among the other fragments of his troubling story: "I've never been quite so happy in my life, I think," he had written from camp, "not quite so *pervasively* happy." And he echoed this from the Aegean, enjoying thoughts of the Trojan War, the Crusades. Others had felt and written the same thing—like Julian Grenfell's "I *adore* war. . . . I've never been so well or so happy"—and they all thought it was marvelous luck to have been just the right age at the right time and place to enjoy it the most. This spirited response of so many young men of the time was to be brutally answered, as it has always been brutally answered, by whatever forces of civilized life require the sacrifice of young life. At one time the horror may have been thought to destroy the myth, but instead, its inclusion reinforced the appeal of the images projected.

Virginia Woolf was five years older than these soldier-poets, but in 1918, reviewing one of the early panegyrics, she spoke of the unfulfillment, the tentative and even polymorphous nature, of Brooke's gifts. Perhaps he was not destined for poetry alone and might have become a man of public life, of power. The uncertainty, the possibility, would be forever before him, and us. Barely three years after his death, buried on Skyros, island of Achilles' waiting, Brooke was already giving back "thoughts by England given," already joining and replenishing all that elegiac repose and continuity. He and the others, horribly dead, would forever be waiting for their future; and thus, in an unexpected nuance from another of his war sonnets, "they had come into their heritage."

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Book of Monsters

THEODORE DREISER: AMERICAN DIARIES, 1902–1926. *Edited by Thomas P. Riggio et al. University of Pennsylvania Press. $28.50.*

Reviewed by KENNETH S. LYNN

The desire of American intellectuals to discredit their countrymen takes many forms, but among historians of American literature it is most often expressed through the telling of horror stories about the victimization of gifted writers by a brutally uncaring society. One of the most harrowing of these tales concerns the near suicide of Theodore Dreiser.

When Dreiser's relentlessly powerful first novel, *Sister Carrie,* appeared in 1900, it sank without a trace, so the story would have us believe. The publisher, Frank Doubleday, who had had second thoughts about handling such a cruel and sexually explicit book, refused to print more than a perfunctory number of copies or to spend any money on advertising and promotion; in effect, the publisher suppressed the novel. Demoralized by this turn of events, the story continues, Dreiser could neither go on working on his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt,* nor complete the magazine assignments on which his livelihood depended. Short of money and overwhelmed with shame at his increasingly shabby appearance, he gave up his Manhattan apartment and sought refuge in a cheap room in Brooklyn. Uncannily, he was reenacting in real life the haunting story of Hurstwood, the once-prosperous saloon manager, whose descent into poverty and eventual self-destruction grimly counterpoint Sister Carrie's rise to fame as an actress. In the winter of 1903 Dreiser thought of applying for a job with a streetcar company—even as Hurstwood had worked as a scab during a streetcar strike—but found he was too weak for such employment. Not only was he not eating enough, but the hallucinations he was having prevented him from getting adequate rest. Finally he resolved to kill himself. Only at the last minute, as he walked beside the East River, did he change his mind.

Thanks to Thomas P. Riggio's exceptionally able introduction to Dreiser's previously unpublished diaries, we now can see that in accepting this account of the novelist's demoralization we have succumbed to a cliché. In the three years between the appearance of *Sister Carrie* and his brush with death, Dreiser often had reason to feel encouraged about what he had accomplished as a writer. If he was depressed by the limited sale of the Doubleday edition of his novel, he was uplifted by the English response to the Heinemann edition and by the interest other American publishers displayed in his plans for future novels. His election to the prestigious Indiana Club of Chicago and the decision of the editors of *Who's Who* to list him as a prominent editor, poet, and author also heartened him.

That he made no mention either of *Sister Carrie* or of Frank Doubleday in the diary he began to keep in 1902 is a further indication that his psychological problems cannot be explained by anything so simple as a social-victim theory. The man who placed himself under the care of a Philadelphia specialist in nervous ailments in the fall of 1902 was suffering from what Professor Riggio calls "an identity crisis accompanied by nervous prostration." On the evidence of the diary, one might add that Dreiser's mood swings were manic-depressive, that he was a compulsive worker who could not keep anxiety at bay without the anodyne of virtually nonstop writing, and that he had remarkably little aptitude for self-analysis. All that the diarist was able to say about himself was that he was frightened of poverty and failure.

Dreiser's wish to shield himself from self-knowledge also prevented him from making progress with the manuscript of *Jennie Gerhardt.* Dreiser had begun this second novel with the intention of drawing on childhood memories of his father and mother, only to discover that the material was too hot to handle. As he told the book editor, Joseph Coates, the "whole story" took such a fearfully powerful grip on his mind that whenever he tried to put it on paper he would exhibit physical symptoms and labor under "a disturbing sense of error." Contrary to the assumption of literary historians, Dreiser's writing block was born, not out of discouragement at the suppression of *Sister Carrie,* but out of a reluc-

KENNETH S. LYNN is professor of history at The Johns Hopkins University and author of *Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor.*

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tance to uncover the repressions and conflicts of his formative years. Although he returned to the manuscript of *Jennie Gerhardt* and completed it some years after his psychological crisis had ended, Dreiser was able to do so only because he had found that, by idealizing the portrait of his father, he could continue to avoid the question of what had gone wrong in his own development.

The obverse of Dreiser's sterile relationship with himself was his sterile relationship with other people. In his time of troubles he did not turn to his friends; he fled from them. And even though he had only been married a short while, the 1902/03 diary is conspicuously lacking in evidences of intimacy with his wife. What we are confronted with instead is an ugly man's frustration at his inability to score sexual touchdowns:

> Being homely and backward, with no art of impressing women, I have always suffered on the side of my affections. Some men have so much. I have had so little.
>
> I came away feeling rather depressed over this again, but I tried not to feel too blue. All men do not have it. There must be thousands like me. There must be thousands more who do not countenance immorality or even flirtation. Anyhow I have not got it and here I am.

Fifteen years later, Dreiser was a renowned writer and a resident of America's free-love capital, Greenwich Village. At long last, he was "getting it" in prodigious quantities, and his diary of the period is not much more than a sexual athlete's tally sheet. Although there were very few men who were interested in being Dreiser's friend, literary ladies and aspiring actresses phoned him day and night, begging for an hour of his time. His secretary and mistress, Estelle Bloom Kubitz, was deeply in love with him and was driven frantic by his liaisons with other women, but the insatiable Dreiser was unswayed by her grief. Estelle, he observed with clinical detachment,

> is morbid over love. Tells me how keenly she feels about me. . . . Sometimes she seems almost insane over me. . . . I must be very calloused. The love moods torture me at the moment, yet a little while later I forget them. And I believe it would almost kill me—be absolutely impossible for me to be faithful to one woman.

To every bedroom, says Professor Riggio with only a trace of exaggeration, Dreiser carried a manuscript. A workaholic as well as a womanizer, Dreiser saw no reason not to kill two birds with one stone by combining copulation with composition. "Fall to work on article, *America*. Do about 2000 words." So he noted on May 29, 1917, as he awaited the arrival in his apartment of his second sex partner of the day. He also encouraged the women he slept with to tell him about their personal lives, so that he could build up his inventory of ideas for articles and short stories, and he further exploited his bedmates by suggesting that they edit and type his manuscripts. Whenever Dreiser was in the arms of a married woman named Louise Fletcher, sex and literature meshed like clockwork.

> Return here. Revise *Will You Walk Into My Parlor?*. At 12:30 Louise calls up. Has arrived at Penna Station. Has first 30 chapters of *Dawn* for me. Takes a taxi and comes here. . . . Louise is crazy about the place. We undress and remain in large studio, naked. Throw all pillows from couch and lie in front of fire on floor. Such loving. Louise is delicious. A perfect body. We screw and talk until 6, when I am flat. . . . Louise recounts full story of her life. It must be true, for it is the same each time. What a tale!

The brutality with which Dreiser treated attractive women was undoubtedly one of the sources of his appeal to them. While biting the neck and feeling the thighs of the magazine writer Nina Wilcox Putnam one November afternoon, he warned her that unless she behaved "just so," she would not get a chance to go to bed with him. "You talk like a thug," Mrs. Putnam breathlessly replied. Yet the curious fact about this thug was that there was a strong feminine component in his personality. He urged his mistresses to tell him their life stories because, for reasons he did not wish to explore, he was impelled to write about the problems of women; and his mistresses in turn were willing to unburden themselves to him because they knew they could count on his identifying with their point of view.

Once again, literary history stands exposed as too simple. For years, we have been accustomed to the idea that Dreiser based *Sister Carrie* on the sad story of his sister Emma, who had run off to New York City with her married lover and the thirty-five-hundred dollars in cash he had taken from the till at

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Chapin and Gore's, the Chicago tavern where he was employed. Although Dreiser's Greenwich Village diary does nothing to discredit this interpretation, it certainly serves to expose its inadequacy. Sister Emma's story offered the fledgling novelist a scaffolding, but from the moment that Dreiser, as if in a trance, wrote the words "Sister Carrie" on a half sheet of yellow copy paper, he thought of himself as the heroine of the book. It was his own excitement at leaving home for Chicago, his own fear of not being able to find work, his own excited thoughts about dining in fancy restaurants that he projected through Carrie's consciousness. And when Dreiser declared in the middle of the first chapter that the "moral significance" of clothes was a subject on which "a woman should some day write the complete philosophy," he inadvertently acknowledged how womanly his viewpoint was even when he stepped out of Carrie's character and spoke in his authorial voice. For if any turn-of-the-century writer was a persistent commentator on clothes, it was Dreiser.

An androgynous strain runs straight through the first fifty years of American realism, from Henry James and Henry Adams to Hemingway and Fitzgerald. But it is only in Dreiser's work that one can separate the wheat from the chaff by a sexual rule. *The "Genius"* is an autobiographical novel about a young man—and it has been deservedly forgotten. *Sister Carrie* and *Jennie Gerhardt* are autobiographical novels about young women—and they are impossible to forget. While there is a certain crude power in *The Financier* and *The Titan*, the two novels that Dreiser wrote about a robber-baron businessman, they are mainly read today by historians. The exception to the rule is *An American Tragedy*, which comes close to being as great an achievement as *Sister Carrie*, and which is the story of a young man. Clyde Griffiths, however, does not have the sort of assertively masculine personality that Dreiser had depicted in his earlier novels that center on male figures; on the contrary, he is almost as passive, and just as much given to brooding, as Sister Carrie. One has to wonder whether the film director George Stevens was not among those readers who have sensed a sexual ambivalence in Clyde, for in Stevens's movie of *An American Tragedy*, he gave the role of Clyde to the weak-mannered Montgomery Clift.

If there is a significant difference between Clyde and Carrie, it is that Clyde not only drops his pregnant girl friend, Roberta Alden, without a qualm, but eventually decides to do away with her, whereas Carrie merely deserts the two men with whom she has lived. Yet if Dreiser's indifference to the suffering of his secretary, Estelle Kubitz, is expressed in Clyde's lack of concern for Roberta's grief, it is also reflected in the ruthlessness with which Carrie eliminates Drouet and Hurstwood from her life. Although she is willing to let Drouet rescue her from poverty and set her up in an apartment, as soon as she meets the slicker and higher-salaried Hurstwood, she says to herself, "What, after all, was Drouet?" And when she finally walks out on the unemployed and well-nigh desperate Hurstwood, it is because she knows that if she stays she will have to start sharing with him her own salary as a chorus girl. One night, a ragged, hungry man accosts Carrie outside the theater where she now is starring and begs her for money. It is Hurstwood. She vouchsafes him a paltry nine dollars and neglects to ask how she can get in touch with him again. He thanks her for the money and shuffles off, as she silently watches him.

Her inability to feel is appalling, and it is made more so by Dreiser's failure fully to understand this fact. Thus when a young man who admires Carrie's acting ability advises her to turn from comedy to the dramatic field, he does so on the grounds that she not only has a melodious voice but an extraordinary supply of human sympathy. As the young man warms to his theme, it is clear that he is speaking for Dreiser, for there is not a whisper of irony in the scene:

"You have so much sympathy and such a melodious voice—make them valuable to others. You will have them so long as they express something in you. You can preserve and increase them longer by using them for others. The moment you forget their value to the world, and they cease to represent your own aspirations, they will begin to fade. Mark that. The sympathetic look will leave your eyes, your mouth will change, your power to act will disappear. You may think they won't, but they will. Nature takes care of that. You can't become self-interested, selfish and luxurious, without having these sympathies and longings disappear, and then you will sit there and wonder what has become of them. You can't remain tender and sympathetic, and desire to serve

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the world, without having it show in your face and your art. . . ."

He stopped again. Carrie gazed on into his eyes. Her little hands were folded in her lap, her lips sweetly parted.

As almost all of his fiction shows, Dreiser envisioned life as a merciless struggle. But in *Sister Carrie*, his masterpiece, he testified to that vision in more ways than he knew. For the novelist who could admit in his diary that he was calloused, but who had no awareness that he was in fact a monster of coldness, had no idea that his autobiographical heroine was a monster too.

Exoskeleton

W. H. AUDEN: A BIOGRAPHY. *By Humphrey Carpenter. Houghton Mifflin. $15.95.*

Reviewed by ALEXIS LEVITIN

In 1933, reviewing *The Book of Talbot*, a biography of an explorer written by his widow, Auden ignored the explorer's adventures and focused instead on the sense of love that informed the book. "Love," he wrote, "has allowed Lady Clifton to constellate round Talbot the whole of her experience and make it significant"; and he concluded with the comment that "the first criterion of success in any human activity, the necessary preliminary, whether to scientific discovery or to artistic vision, is intensity of attention or, less pompously, love."

It is precisely this quality that is missing from Carpenter's conscientiously documented biography of W. H. Auden. There is a richness of amusing and revealing details, anecdotes, and quotations, but for all this the vast construction is not a labor of love. Rarely does Carpenter seem moved by the vulnerability of the man he is portraying or by the greatness of his poetry. One might argue, of course, that the biographer's task demands deliberate distancing, but many practitioners of the art agree with André Maurois when he says that although submerging oneself in one's subject's life "is *very* dangerous . . . *there is no other method.*"

Carpenter, it is clear, has found another method. Avoiding the dangers of the usual five- or six-year emotional residence of biographer with subject, he has managed, drawing resourcefully on the writings and memories of those who knew him, to bring together, in a relatively short time, an informative chronological record of Auden's life. There is no doubt that in reading his book one can learn much about Auden. But it is literally *about* him. For in the last analysis, this energetically researched biography, multifaceted as it is, remains an exoskeleton: the creature within has not been revealed.

This exoskeleton, however, is of considerable value, for it provides a vast quantity of information about all the stages of Auden's life. For example, we can trace the early stirrings of his love for the sound of poetry, from his admiration at age fourteen for the magnificent bass voice of "Took" Tyler reading the Bible or Shakespeare aloud, to his collegiate response to Professor Tolkien's recitation from *Beowulf* ("I was spellbound.").

We can also observe the development of Auden's lifelong anti-romantic stance, a conscious adherence to the need for form and order. At Saint Edmunds, aged ten, he impresses everyone with "his rather clinical detachment." At sixteen, he himself is most impressed by Thomas Hardy's "hawk vision, his way of looking at life from a very great height." At eighteen, he chastises an Oxford friend for his "abysmal romanticism" and calls himself "an incurable classic." At twenty, he proclaims: "Intellect's the only thing that matters at *all*." After graduation, he writes a poem in which he says: "Coming out of me, living is always thinking." More than a decade later, he writes to Spender: "I must have knowledge and a great deal of it before I can feel anything." And, in later years, to justify his obsession with punctuality, he describes himself as a Modern Stoic who realizes that "the surest way to discipline passion is to discipline time" (while examining, with fascination, Shakespeare's Falstaff, the great defier of time). Though Carpenter characteristically refrains from comment, the very vehemence of Auden's anti-romanticism provokes some doubt. Could he be, to use Conrad's phrase, "one of us"?

✪ ALEXIS LEVITIN, a critic and translator from the Portuguese, has taught at Universities in Brazil, Portugal, and the United States.

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Another aspect of Auden's life that Carpenter documents, though without dwelling on its significance, is the man's essential loneliness. Spender, looking back at the Auden of Oxford days, finds that he "lacked something in human relationships" and that "in the long run he was rather isolated." Shortly after moving to America, Auden comments that "the first feature that strikes a European about characters in American fiction . . . is their extreme loneliness." In a long letter to E. R. Dodds, written about the same time, Auden discusses the importance of roots and says that now, in the machine age, everyone is isolated, all sense of community is gone, and that he, therefore, is trying in America "to live deliberately without roots." In his famous "New Year Letter," Auden finds virtue in America's acknowledgment that "aloneness is man's real condition." Three years later, in a letter to Elizabeth Mayer, he says: "There are days when the knowledge that there will never be a place which I can call home, that there will never be a person with whom I shall be one flesh, seems more than I can bear." Five years later, in *Harper's Magazine*, he writes: "Each must go his way alone, every step of it." Then, toward the end, the London headline: LONELY AUDEN: WILL OXFORD GIVE HIM REFUGE? And not long thereafter, his death itself, as he had predicted twenty-five years before, alone, behind a locked hotel-room door.

There is also the question of sex and love. As for the former, Carpenter is more than thorough in documenting Auden's proclivities and difficulties. It is a pity, in fact, that he couldn't temper a bit his obvious fascination with the shocking homosexual world his research had uncovered. For example, in a book almost devoid of poetic analysis, Carpenter devotes a page and a half to Auden's notorious pornographic poem, while acknowledging that "as poetry [it] is negligible." Why then dwell on it? Especially when "The Shield of Achilles," perhaps one of the great poems of our century, is given a single sentence? And why are we told so much about sexual preferences and positions and relatively little about emotional complexities that are far more important? Surely truth could be served with less voyeuristic zeal.

When it comes to love, however, Mr. Carpenter does a much better job. He discusses the relationship of Agape and Eros at some length, noting that even in Auden's love sonnets of the early thirties Eros does not have the redeeming power of Agape. He also records Auden's later dictum: "Agape is the fulfillment and correction of Eros, not its contradiction." He calls attention to the significant refrain "O tell me the truth about love" written in the troubled year before Auden met Chester Kallman. And then, of course, he discusses at some length Auden's love for Kallman, a love which, to Auden, at least, was that of an enduring marriage.

Although Carpenter, choosing to minimize his involvement with Auden's craft, does not emphasize a continuity of concern with the poetry, he includes enough of it so that the engaged reader can discover a pattern in which the search for love is a recurring theme. Whether the terms be those of Lawrence, Freud, Marx, Homer Lane, Groddeck, or, finally, the Church, the need for love is a constant throughout Auden's poetry. It is also, I believe, a constant in his own life, as Carpenter's documentation suggests. It is unfortunate that Carpenter's modest aims as a biographer prevent him from drawing any conclusions from his carefully collected material.

Anti-romanticism, loneliness, sex, and love are not all that Carpenter touches on. He details, with much success, Auden's extensive role as a teacher, both in England and in America. He follows his subject on his trips to Spain, Iceland, and China. He devotes much attention to Auden's work as a librettist (usually in collaboration with Kallman) and notes, if rather lightly, Auden's lifelong affection for music. He records his habit of sleeping under piles of blankets, robes, carpets, and curtains; remarks on his fondness for the word "cozy"; and quotes the late poems that end "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Fog" and, more ominously still, "Sleep, Big Baby, sleep your fill" (yet never *discusses* Auden's deep yearning for a retreat from the world to the security of the Great Good Place, lost by us all at birth).

He also provides occasional glimpses of the generosity, humanity, and even humility of the man we all know as a bearlike public figure. His comment on T. S. Eliot: "I shall never be as great and good a man if I live to be a hundred." His spontaneous gifts (of large sums) to Dorothy Day, William Empson, and

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others. His statement in a book review written a year before his death: "I have always felt that to be walking this earth is a miracle I must do my best to deserve." (Thirty-five years earlier he had written: "Life remains a blessing, although you cannot bless.") And best of all, Natasha Spender opening a bedroom door and hearing Auden say, "I want half a pound of rice, and be sure to bring me the change." He was playing shop with her daughter Lizzie.

For Carpenter, the facts of a life are important, and he has gathered them together diligently. But the other half of a biographer's task, the attempt to reveal the soul of his subject, has been neglected. This biography provides the raw materials, but it remains up to us, the readers, to find the coherence of Auden's life, to balance his vulnerability and his great gift, and thus to discover the man.

Wystan Auden lived a life rich in thought, poetry, music, and, against his own disclaimer, feeling. That he paid dearly for this richness his face made clear. Mr. Carpenter, his biographer, has faithfully recorded the events of Auden's life. But I wonder, has he been touched by the ravages of that man's face?

"How to recreate a face? a figure? a voice? . . . How to make the absent present, visible, tangible?" one of Auden's friends, V. S. Yanovsky, asked himself as he began his memoir of the poet. To one who has known Auden and sensed the tragic quality in his stature and his isolation, there can be only one answer: "With intensity of attention. With love."

Philadelphia Story

PHILADELPHIA: PATRICIANS AND PHILISTINES, 1900–1950. *By John Lukacs. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $17.50*

Reviewed by E. DIGBY BALTZELL

This is a delightfully written collection of biographical essays on the lives of seven Philadelphians who lived and worked in the city during the first half of the twentieth century; it opens with a brief chapter on Philadelphia in 1900 and closes with another on the city in 1950. While the half century of brutality and war changed much of the rest of our world beyond recognition, it did less damage to Philadelphia, sheltered as it was, even in 1950, by a thick crust of traditional customs. Fortunately John Lukacs, a native of Budapest who has spent his adult life in Philadelphia, has great empathy "for the utter charm of an American city behind the times." Thus he was pleased to find that in 1950 "much of the coziness, the slowness, the warmth, the privacy of the Philadelphia spirit continued to prevail." What I am suggesting is that the charm of this book is largely due to the sympathetic perceptions of the author, both in his portraits of the seven Philadelphians and in his sketches of the city in 1900 and in 1950. This is not to say that Lukacs is uncritical of his adopted city, but rather that he writes with loving irony and sophisticated wit; following Agnes Repplier's advice, he knows that even witty criticism is the salt, rather than the food, of good writing.

The seven Philadelphians Lukacs chooses are: two authors, Agnes Repplier, a distinguished essayist, and Owen Wister, whose novel *The Virginian* created the American cowboy myth; two Philadelphia gentlemen-lawyers who also served in the Senate of the United States, Boies Penrose and George Wharton Pepper; two self-made and highly egocentric millionaires, Edward Bok, brilliant editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and Albert Coombs Barnes, who made a fortune out of the patent medicine Argyrol and became a veritable Main Line Medici; and finally, William Christian Bullitt, Philadelphia patrician by birth, who was, in 1933, our first ambassador to the Soviet Union, and our ambassador to France from 1936 until the Germans marched into Paris in 1940.

What did these seven Philadelphians have in common? "Except for certain similarities of breeding and education," Lukacs answers, "not much." (Penrose and Wister, by the way, were at Harvard together; Pepper and Barnes were graduates of the University of Pennsylvania; Bullitt was voted the most brilliant man in his class at Yale; while Bok and Repplier never went to college.) They all, actually, had one thing in common: "Their mothers, without exception, were stronger than their fa-

E. DIGBY BALTZELL is professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*.

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thers," writes Lukacs, even in an age "when women were thought to be subservient, when families were paternalistic, when masculinity was unchallenged and dominant." But, as he rightly observes, Victorian women were "strong but not assertive." Because the sons of dominant mothers—from Alexander the Great, through Napoleon, down to Roosevelt and Churchill—have so often stood out in history, this would hardly be a reason for choosing these seven Philadelphians rather than others. I should think, rather, that they were seven people who interested John Lukacs, and these delightful essays tell his readers, all the while telling himself, just why he likes his adopted city and its people. Or to put it another way, is it not true that all of us choose our ancestors? Mine are very different from those of my two brothers. John Lukacs is the author of ten distinguished works of history; had he chosen to make careerist America his spiritual home, in New York, in Chicago, or even in modern Cambridge, Massachusetts, for instance, he would have sought ancestral roots in some intellectual or professional milieu. As a true Philadelphian by adoption, however, he has chosen to root himself in a city behind the times, a city that still values the gentleman-amateur above the careerist, the person above the professional. And the subjects of these seven portraits are of interest to Lukacs personally rather than professionally. Like Agnes Repplier, he has chosen to please as well as to instruct his readers, a very difficult task in which he has succeeded, with a light and indirect touch, all the while making us aware that his insights and judgments are informed by his own catholic knowledge of the art and literature of several cultures. He has happily chosen to write as an old-fashioned man of letters rather than as the professional historian he surely is.

Lukacs likes Agnes Repplier, a Catholic woman of catholic tastes, far more than the six WASP men; he prefers Boies Penrose, a brilliant patrician rogue, to George Wharton Pepper, a charming patrician philistine; he prefers Albert Barnes, who ran down the city's major cultural institutions and their patrician leaders with single-minded zest, to Edward Bok, an inveterate booster and benefactor.

All four of these people were extremely interesting. The Penroses were a family of great wealth and also kin to the prominent Biddles of Philadelphia and all the other right people. Boies was a brilliant misanthrope from an early age: at the local Protestant Episcopal academy, he refused to play football (though he was already a giant who would eventually weigh over three hundred pounds) because he could not stand the smelly, sweaty bodies of his little patrician pals; he had no friends at Harvard, where he almost flunked out before writing a brilliant senior thesis and graduating with honors; soon bored with the law, he entered politics, first as a reformer, but eventually as the cynical political boss of Pennsylvania, which he represented in the United States Senate from 1897 until his death in 1921; the very term "Bossism" was coined to describe his two brilliant predecessors in Pennsylvania, Simon Cameron and Matthew Quay. One of the most interesting things about Penrose was that he anticipated his whole political career in his honors thesis at Harvard (class of 1881). It began: "Martin Van Buren was the first and greatest of American politicians. . . . He marks the transition in American politics from statesmen like Adams and Webster to the great political bosses and managers of today." He then went on to show how this transition from class to boss rule was "the natural result of the radical democratic development of the country."

Bosses like Matthew Quay and Boies Penrose were made possible, if not necessary, by the values of the class of patricians to which George Wharton Pepper belonged. Well-connected, handsome, and highly intelligent, Pepper was an extremely successful lawyer of limited accomplishment. In a candid autobiography he lamented his lack of imagination and, even more revealing of the values of his class, wrote that "never in my life have I felt the itch for public office." In spite of himself, he did serve a brief period in the United States Senate after Penrose's death; but he spent most of his time in beautifying the District of Columbia, especially in completing the Washington Cathedral.

In 1953, Pepper won the Philadelphia Award, which was founded and endowed in 1921 by Edward Bok in order to encourage civic-mindedness in the very private City of Brotherly Love. Bok was brought to Philadelphia by Cyrus H. K. Curtis to edit the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Seven years later he married Curtis's only child and, along with George

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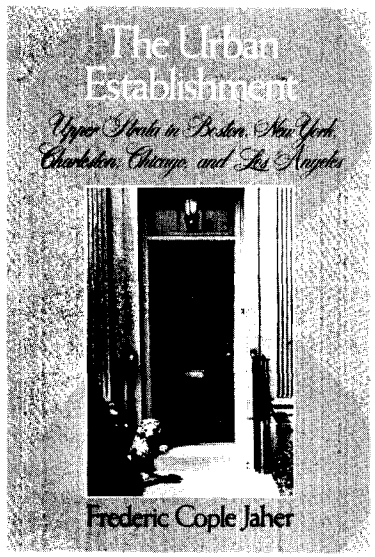

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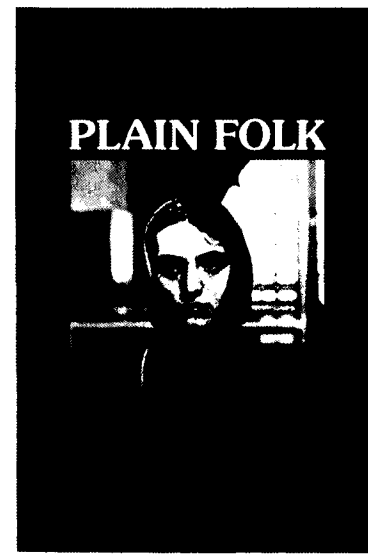

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Horace Lorimer of the *Saturday Evening Post*, made the Curtis Publishing Company, on Independence Square, the spiritual home of respectability and Americanism for millions of middle-class readers. The *Journal*, as Lukacs puts it, was "educational without being intellectual, direct rather than genteel, elevating yet standardizing, class-conscious and classless at the same time." Bok and his descendants have been great benefactors of the city in general, but especially in music where they have been important sponsors of the Philadelphia Orchestra and founders of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Albert Barnes, patent medicine king, built a palace of art at Merion on the Main Line, not far from the Bok mansion. Lukacs does a thoroughly entertaining and sympathetic job of outlining the combative career of this authentic genius, who was unfortunately also a boorish paranoid.

The essay on Owen Wister is the shortest of all and the least satisfactory. As he is one of my favorite adopted ancestors, I was disappointed, but understand the reasons: nobody as yet has done any better. But, just as I would rather have written *The Great Gatsby* than all of Edmund Wilson's (Fitzgerald's contemporary) brilliant essays put together, so I would rather have written *The Virginian* than all the essays of Agnes Repplier.

And finally, Lukacs is extremely fond of William Christian Bullitt, a Proper Philadelphian born on Rittenhouse Square in its heyday, who, nevertheless, spent his whole adult life abroad and built his only American home in Massachusetts. There really is not much excuse for including Bullitt in this group of portraits; besides his being an expatriate, he was of an entirely different generation. In 1900, for instance, Agnes Repplier was forty-two years of age and an established author at the *Atlantic Monthly*, while Bullitt was a mere lad of nine running around Rittenhouse Square in short pants. But I am amused by, rather than critical of, this choice; after all, Lukacs is a fine diplomatic historian and has a perfect right to allow his professional interests to dictate this inclusion. The essay is just as interesting as the rest, for Bullitt knew everyone, from Sigmund Freud to Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt; and he married Lucy Bryant, widow of John Reed. (Although Lukacs does not mention it, James Roosevelt claims that Bullitt was briefly engaged to his father's longtime private secretary, Missy Le Hand.) Lukacs is more sympathetic to Bullitt's turning against the two men who made his career, Wilson and Roosevelt, than I am.

The essay on Agnes Repplier, the longest in the book by far, is brilliantly sympathetic and bound to spark a revival of interest in this Philadelphia lady of letters whom Mary Ellen Chase, in 1933, called the "Dean of American Essayists," a judgment with which Ellery Sedgwick of the *Atlantic Monthly* heartily agreed. Agnes Repplier was born into a German-Catholic family in an age (1858) when genteel Philadelphians placed all Catholics in the same category as their Irish servants. But her family lived in a genteel neighborhood and at the edge of fashionable society; having a mind of her own, young Agnes was dismissed, first from a Catholic seminary for girls and then from the Agnes Irwin School, the city's most fashionable school. She taught herself to read on her own schedule at the age of ten and then proceeded to read everything (rereading more than the rest of us ever do for the first time).

The wound was surely the bow in Agnes Repplier's case. In her teens, her father did poorly in business and the family was forced to move to a shabby neighborhood in West Philadelphia. Her mother, an unsympathetic and highly critical perfectionist, nevertheless knew talent when she saw it, and she saw it easily in Agnes, in spite of her wayward ways at school; for many years young Agnes was forced to write for money.

The turning point came when Father Isaac Hecker, a German-American priest, founder of the Paulist order, and editor of the *Catholic World*, accepted several of her stories and then wrote her a letter suggesting that she knew more about books than men and asked for an essay on Ruskin. Within two years, in 1886, she published her first essay in the *Atlantic Monthly;* there followed six decades of some four hundred polished and keen-witted essays (and a dozen books).

Bound by her author's calling and working like a beaver all of her life, she nevertheless always carried her burdens lightly; she not only won all the literary honors, but she was also accepted in the bosom of Proper Philadelphia; and Lukacs liked the fact that on one occasion she said: "I like the people at the

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Acorn Club. They never do anything." For Agnes Repplier was no puritan and liked the blue-blooded ladies of leisure at the Acorn Club just as she did the more intellectual ladies at the Cosmopolitan Club, which she helped to found.

Mass for the Dead

THE TRUANTS: ADVENTURES AMONG THE INTELLECTUALS. By *William Barrett. Doubleday. $15.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN P. SISK

As it happened, my reading of William Barrett's splendid book coincided with the last two episodes of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* on public television, so that the nostalgic pull in one work reinforced that of the other. The similarities between the otherwise quite different revisitations are striking enough to set up reverberations: in each, a first-person narrator returns to a scene heavily charged with a perspective long since lived through and rejected (for Charles Ryder it is a callow materialism, for Barrett it is Marxism); in each, these meanings are intertwined with a friendship (Ryder's with Sebastian Flyte, Barrett's with Delmore Schwartz) that had once promised to be as enduring as the perspective but failed that promise. And each is a Mass for the Dead in which the celebrant surveys the subject of his revisitation from a once unimaginable position.

The inciting event in Barrett's beautiful prologue is the appearance of Philip Rahv's picture, a month after his death early in 1974, on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*. At this point Schwartz (no one was more able "to catch the excitement around him and concentrate it into such electric concentration in himself") has been dead for six years, and Lionel Trilling ("the most intelligent man of his generation") will be dead within a year. Of course, there will be the deaths of many major and minor characters to celebrate in the requiem that the author begins on that rainy Sunday: John Berryman, Paul Goodman, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Edmund Wilson, Hannah Arendt, and T. S. Eliot ("I had not thought death had undone so many").

Barrett takes his title from a novel Rahv often thought of in his later Brandeis years but never got around to writing. It would have been about the people Rahv had known in connection with the *Partisan Review* who, during all those years of the magazine, "had been playing truant, escaping for a while from the harshness of whatever practical reality would claim them again." Barrett himself was one of those truants, having ridden back from Italy at the end of the war on the bucket seat of an airplane to become, much to his surprise, an associate editor of the magazine. His truant adventures among the intellectuals thus covers mainly the decade after World War II, "a time when the world seemed opening up to us and we looked forward to a promising future."

As Rahv and William Phillips expressed it in their "Retrospect" to the 1946 *Partisan Reader*, what made that future look so promising was the combination of an exciting range of imaginative expression and political ideas, the latter being Marxist, in sharp conflict with Russian communism. To many of us who returned to America, by bucket seat or otherwise, the Marxism in this great collection and in subsequent issues of the magazine was easily overlooked, ignored, or misunderstood—starved as we were for imaginative expression after our long truancy in the service. Perhaps we sensed (at least it is flattering to think so) what Trilling later pointed out: that the modernist literature we read gave little support to true believers of radical political ideas. For Barrett, however, Marxism and modernism were the "two regions of the spirit where my loyalties lay." His gradual discovery that these loyalties were not really consistent with one another is the central theme of his book.

Early in these adventures the author warns us that the "I" of his book is only an observer, not the subject, and that "if some personal facts are brought forward they are intended merely to convey the mood of the occasion or the point of view of the observer." It is true that the personal facts are severely rationed here; Mr. Barrett writes with a tact and a

JOHN P. SISK, Arnold Professor of the Humanities at Gonzaga University, is the author of *Person and Institution*. His essays and reviews have appeared in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, and other journals.

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modesty that we have learned not to expect from first-person narrations. But a reader of literature as sensitive as Mr. Barrett must know that, in a revisitation of the past, the command of point of view can be more personalizing than any accumulation of autobiographical detail. His "I" is as central to *The Truants* as Nick Carraway is to *The Great Gatsby* or Ishmael to *Moby Dick*. This is said in an effort not to deconstruct his memoir but to indicate the ultimate source of its charm and power.

The scarcity of personal facts may be one reason why, in a book so judgmental and so apparently grounded on positive convictions, we so often have to proceed by negatives when we attempt to specify the social, political, aesthetic, and philosophic values that structure point of view. Mr. Barrett does not, as he believes Clement Greenberg did, look for "philosophic support in modern positivism"; he is not a nihilist as he believes Randall Jarrell to have been; he is not a Trotskyite as Dwight Macdonald and James Burnham once were; Freud is not the disaster for him that he was for Schwartz; he does not share Rahv's paradoxical combination of Swiftian pessimism and Marxist optimism; he is no longer at home with intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Goodman, who, "not hedged in by the ordinary restraints of human nature," let "their heads take over completely and fabricate values in the air."

Barrett clearly prefers Camus to Sartre. *The Fall* by Camus, he believes, "can be read as a parable of the modern intellectual who is without a superego, without a sense of 'ordinary' values, and develops by way of compensation an outsized, maniacal but still cerebral sense of guilt." Nothing, in fact, is more central to this book than its concern with the consequences of a truancy from ordinary values. The intellectual juggling of Sartre's glorification of Jean Genet is no less the product of such truancy than is the postwar contamination of the art world by Marxist ideology (see the splendid chapter on "The Painters' Club"); the contamination of the poet's world by the myth of the *poète maudit* as fleshed out by the lives of Schwartz, Berryman, and Jarrell; or the contamination of the political world by the liberals' inability to conceive of revolution with the sense of limits that characterizes Camus's *Rebel*.

Mr. Barrett's own hard-won sense of limits (for him, apparently, that quintessential modern experience, the discovery of illusion, has resulted in education, not devastation) has protected him from the temptation to indulge without limit in gossip. However, his book is still rich with moments that are memorable because they are so thematically appropriate: Phillips, Schwartz, and Greenberg enticing Rahv to a luncheon at which, over coffee, he could be confronted Mafia-style about his editorial high-handedness; Hannah Arendt proving to be too much for Rahv's autodidactic ranting; Cyril Connolly grinding out his cigar in Diana Trilling's chocolate mousse; the authoritative Simone de Beauvoir irritating her American hosts by lecturing them on what was wrong with America and Americans; the unsuspecting Lionel Trilling going to an East Village loft to meet E. M. Forster only to find his idol "camping all over the place" at a party of homosexuals; the disintegrating Schwartz sitting in morose silence in front of his Harvard class; Jarrell, the brilliant prodigy, coming to town like a strange gunman and consternating Rahv with his assertion that death was meaningless.

Rahv, who maintained throughout life "the simplemindedness of the village atheist" and yet managed to combine a nihilistic attitude with a utopian politics, in the end took a stand against that meaninglessness by leaving his money to the State of Israel—a place where, he once told Barrett wistfully, people "believe in something." Where Schwartz was with respect to that possible meaninglessness when he died alone in a cheap hotel room, God only knows; when Barrett saw him for the last time in a Village restaurant, Schwartz burst into an incoherent ranting against the world that left Barrett in tears.

Barrett's final treatment of the revered Trilling—whose chastity of mind kept him from seeking "substitutes for religion in political causes and crusades"—is one of the most moving passages in the book. It is a description of the formal funeral service for Trilling in Saint Paul's Chapel at Columbia. A rabbi and a minister were present; there was a reading of psalms and a brief musical offering. Whether the service could be called religious was not clear to Barrett. "Death," he writes, "is one part of life where a thoroughly secular attitude seems to hit us as crudely inade-

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quate"—and especially inadequate for one who was "the best example of the civilized humanist our period has to offer." Such a man deserved a Mass for the Dead with full panoply.

Nevertheless, one is tempted to say that in the context of this book there is an appropriateness in the ambiguity of that service, for as Barrett reads Trilling, it was the increasing secularity of our culture since the early seventeenth century that Trilling failed to take into account in his search for the essential modernity of modern literature. This least truant of men was, like the service that honored him, a victim of truant times.

Moral Tourism

POLITICAL PILGRIMS: TRAVELS OF WESTERN INTELLECTUALS TO THE SOVIET UNION, CHINA, AND CUBA. *By Paul Hollander. Oxford University Press. $25.*

Reviewed by JAMES HITCHCOCK

This book is like the proverbial ripe fruit—it has been shining in the sun, waiting to be plucked, for a long time. The wonder is that someone has not snatched it long before this.

Paul Hollander, a sociologist who grew up in Hungary but was educated in England and the United States, traces, in rather exhaustive detail, the opinions of articulate Westerners about the Communist "experiments" in three of its major laboratories, beginning with the Soviet Union of 1917 and concluding with recent judgments about China and Cuba. (Along the way he throws in a few stray reactions to such places as Albania and East Germany.) There are few surprises in the book, but it is nonetheless extremely thorough, well argued, and well written.

The story is one about which reasonably well-informed Americans hardly need to be told—that ever since the Russian Revolution there has been a steady stream of people, ostensibly committed to humane values requiring personal freedom, who have hailed various Communist experiments as the hope of the future and have either minimized problems or denied them altogether. Even if the story is well known, it is good to have it told so thoroughly. Hollander shows that the reaction of these people has not been the result of an occasional personal aberration but has been consistent and according to pattern—almost predictable in its forms. What he also shows, although he does not belabor the point, is that it cannot be excused as mere naiveté. Most people who sent back glowing reports of the Red experiments were deceived because they wanted to be deceived. There were even instances (such as Mary McCarthy in North Vietnam) when the reporter explicitly justified not turning a critical eye on the regime, since to do so would have been ungracious.

If human beings learn from history, there is no proof here. Despite so many people having been burned by their support of the Soviet experiment all the way up to World War II, exactly the same mistakes were made about China thirty years later. And just as Khrushchev confirmed most of what anti-Communists had said about Stalin, so the most damaging criticisms of Mao Tse-tung have been confirmed in recent statements by the Chinese government itself. Furthermore, while the scene has changed from Russia to Cuba to China, with intermittent stops along the way, not all the cast has changed. A few of the same names—the "Red Dean" Hewlett Johnson and the American radical Scott Nearing, for example—keep turning up, singing the same song with only a few changes in the lyrics.

Hollander offers complex and varied explanations for the gullibility of so many people who should have known better. He is comprehensive and persuasive, as well as free of sociological jargon. However, the organization of the book is a bit confusing and wearying because the reader keeps encountering the same names and the same episodes, each time considered from a slightly different angle. It might have been more felicitous to consider each person as a discrete case study and to draw out the general patterns at the end.

Hollander's explanations are fairly familiar but, again, welcome. They range from the simplest (but not necessarily the most obvious)—that visitors to totalitarian countries have been flattered and treated royally—to somewhat speculative discussions of the modern intellectual's disenchantment with a frag-

✪ JAMES HITCHCOCK is professor of history at St. Louis University. His latest book is *The New Enthusiasts.*

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mented technological society and his longing for the wholeness that a totalitarian society promises. There is admittedly a problem in defining an intellectual. Hollander, probably wisely, uses a pragmatic definition: anybody who is interested in ideas and can articulate them.

Whether deliberately or not, his account somewhat minimizes leftist ideology as a causal factor in favor of explanations that are more personal and psychological. Yet one of the striking things about the phenomenon he surveys is the fact that so few of the people who said such egregious things (deadly lies in many cases, if viewed objectively) suffered any permanent loss of credibility as a result. Even among those who did not share the same illusions, there has been a persistent tendency to treat left-leaning myopia as merely an expression of misguided idealism. It is this, above all, that makes it so easy for the same absurd charades to be played over and over again each time a new progressive utopia is discovered.

Such a subject—situating political credulity in the larger context of American intellectual life—might be worth a book in itself. In the meantime Hollander's work belongs on the shelf of anyone who wants to understand the American intelligentsia of the past sixty-five years.

The Emperor Doesn't Exist

THE PLACE OF POETRY: TWO CENTURIES OF AN ART IN CRISIS. *By Christopher Clausen. University of Kentucky Press. $12.50.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR KRYSTAL

At a time when our most influential critics are tightening the hermeneutic circle around the act of composition and the act of interpretation, often seeming to limit the appreciation of poetry to critics, and only privileged ones at that, it is refreshing to come across a study that places poetry squarely back in the world. Such an approach to criticism, however, is not without its risks. The historical treatment

ARTHUR KRYSTAL is a writer and editor living in New York City.

"Father asked him what stream this was, and the man said, 'the Onion River.' Quite a damper, for Father was regarding it in a poetical light, but he presently consoled himself by calling it the Onino . . ."

The Letters of Ellen Tucker Emerson

edited by Edith E. W. Gregg, foreword by Gay Wilson Allen

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of poetry, precisely because of its well-intentioned efforts to assimilate a variety of materials as well as every possible sphere of influence, is often a vexing and inconclusive undertaking, almost sure to favor one set of cultural forces over another. Nonetheless, it is criticism without restriction, without the narrowing of focus on either the text or the reader, and for this reason we must both laud and take objection to *The Place of Poetry*.

Christopher Clausen's argument is disarmingly straightforward: Since the middle of the eighteenth century, poets and critics have denied or gradually disregarded the intellectual responsibilities of poetry, and this has "in all probability" accounted for the decline of the poetic audience. One reason for this abdication has been the ascendancy of science during the past three hundred years. Threatened by the academies' embrace of science as the only true heuristic medium, men of letters resorted to making increasing claims for poetry. This defense took two forms: (1) poetry, like science, conveyed truths about the world; or (2) poetry, within its own scheme, represented an integral and self-sufficient aesthetic, apart from the world. The first proposition was further divided into what Clausen refers to as the "hard argument"—the assertion that poetry is nothing less than a prophetic vision of the universe—and the "soft argument"—which, in Matthew Arnold's famous words, upheld poetry as "a criticism of life . . . capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty." Eloquent though this plea may be, it did not, in Clausen's opinion, check the spreading notion that poetry was essentially childish and irrelevant.

Nonetheless, a resurgence of public interest in poetry occurred in the late nineteenth century with the publication, in 1861, of Francis Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. This anthology, which is still in print in updated versions, succeeded in fixing in the public mind a conception of poetry that dramatically simplified both its form and function. Nonsatirical poetry dealt exclusively with love, death, religion, war, external nature, and recollections of childhood. And to be "poetical," a poem had to be short, unambiguous, and lyrical (that is, turning "on some single thought, feeling, or situation"). With this volume in hand, Her Majesty's officers and civil servants could bring to the farthest edges of the Empire proof of a secure and pastoral England.

The outbreak of World War I shattered this conventional picture of England. Conventional attitudes about poetry, however, remained largely intact among ordinary readers, despite the emergence of the modernist movement. In fact, Clausen contends that one reason why the nonacademic audience for poetry is so small today is because of the "enormous gap in taste" between the heirs of modernism (those who write and study poetry) and ordinary readers (who hark back to Palgrave). The irony here is that, in ridding itself of formal characteristics and adopting free verse to portray the world more realistically, in language approximating the vocabulary and rhythms of ordinary discourse, poetry succeeded in losing what little audience it had left.

If there is nothing particularly new in this historical overview, Clausen is nonetheless to be commended for reminding us that art cannot exist in an intellectual vacuum and that poets, as Lionel Trilling put it, must be seen as barometers and also as part of the weather. The trouble with Clausen's method, however, is that it leaves too little to disagree with. By invoking the specter of cultural history, Clausen finds himself, within his brief compass, either standing pat on certain judgments or hedging his bets on others. For example, he says—though much too late in the book—that at one time "the unity of the poem reflected the unity of the world, something that the poetic imagination had found, not made." No argument there—but what happened to shake this confidence? What occurred between the time when Sir Thomas Browne felt capable of describing reality as "that universal and public Manuscript" and today when the depiction of reality—to use Clausen's own words—"has come for many poets to mean the documentation of often meaningless details"? If this is asking too much, it is Clausen himself who invites such expectations.

What Clausen does make abundantly clear is that once poetry's place in Western culture began to be extolled, the game was already up. The presumed dichotomy between reason and imagination, which caused poets and crit-

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ics, "even Romantic ones," to defend poetry as a valid conduit of knowledge, simply brought the issue to a head and began a debate that has never been satisfactorily resolved. Perhaps—but would not Clausen have been more accurate in saying "*especially* Romantic ones"? To be sure, he does not skimp in giving an account of Shelley's cognitive claims for the creative faculty ("the basis of all knowledge"), but it is also important, I think, to remark that most poets and critics (Coleridge consciously, Keats subliminally) were aware that in Kantian architectonics the imagination was the mediating faculty between sense and understanding, without which the mind could not reproduce temporal order or conceive distinct objects. Imagination was not regarded by most Romantics as simply an instrument that could mold the "spontaneous overflow of emotions recollected in tranquility" into poetry. Instead, it represented for them that power of the mind which could successfully integrate the concepts of God, man, and nature into a harmonious whole.

In the intellectually charged atmosphere of the early nineteenth century, the question of poetry's validity aroused strong feelings. Among those defending poetry's virtues were Shelley, Arnold, and Carlyle; among those decrying its lack of substance were Peacock, Macaulay, and Bentham. But no hard evidence ever declared for one side as against the other. While utilitarianism and *The Golden Treasury* were eroding poetry's intellectual base, serious poets never entirely repudiated their intellectual office. While the cultural influence of poetry was past its peak by 1870, some volumes of poetry continued to earn large profits. Granted, it is difficult to weigh one set of such observations against another, but because Clausen shuttles vigorously between points of view, we are left with a polemical tract in which there is too much grist for the mill to grind properly.

But it is a measure of Clausen's thoughtful survey—and I do not mean to damn with faint praise—that he makes us realize that the issues are more complicated than is his presentation of them. How, for example, did nationalism and the belief in the individual affect the place of poetry? What were the attitudes and expectations of the emerging literate working class toward poetry? More important,

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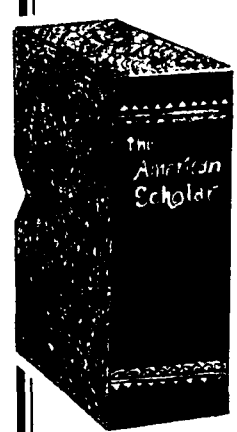

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were not all kinds of thinking during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries subsumed under the idea of progress? The book fails to mention that every discipline looked for its meaning in the scientific systemization of its parts and considered itself more or less bound to truth by its affinity to such classification. Thus, to a significant extent, attempts to *defend* poetry were in keeping with the intellectual temper of the times, which *redefined* everything in light of the scientific method.

One presupposition of this book is that "important poetry conveys significant ideas normally intended to apply to the world outside the poem." Thus fortified, Clausen argues that modernist poets, in spite of their determination to fashion autonomous works that are not beholden to the world, cannot avoid apprehending and articulating a world view. In fact, once we get past what modernist poets said about poetry and the technical flourishes of the poems themselves, their poems are "very much what one might have expected to find half a century after Arnold and Hopkins."

It was only *after* modernism—which ceased to be itself as soon as it became established—that poets struck out for more distant theoretical shores, where everything could be exploited for poetry's pleasure. Believing that the meaning of poetry lay in increasingly insurrectionary means of expression, poets removed themselves further and further from a general audience, retreating finally into a "demoralized solipsism."

Thirty years ago, R. P. Blackmur had this to say about the state of the art:

> There was at hand for Dante, and as a rule in the great ages of poetry, a fundamental agreement or convention between the poet and his audience about the validity of the view of life of which the poet deepened the reality and spread the scope. There is no such agreement today. We find poets either using the small conventions of the individual life as if they were large conventions, or attempting to resurrect some great convention of the past, or, finally, attempting to discover the great convention that must lie, willy-nilly, in the life about them.

For Clausen, the situation remains much the same. The same spool of film is being run repeatedly on numerous projectors. Poets continue to invest the quotidian with transcendent values, shaping a bright nimbus around life's trivia. Although there are some serious-minded, technically inventive poets around today (Clausen singles out John Hollander, Derek Walcott, A. D. Hope, and Judith Wright), poetry itself does not demonstrate a significant re-presentation of the world. Whether this is because poets feel no responsibility, or are unable, to view the world as a coherent, ultimately comprehensible system or whether it is because reality itself now begins outside verbal language is a question that Clausen wisely lets pass.

Yet a demand for poetry exists. Poetry is even enjoying a renaissance, if we are to believe James Atlas, writing in the *New York Times Magazine* (February 3, 1980). Why? Clausen gives the reason succinctly and, to my way of thinking, judiciously: "It is doubtful that at any time in the past many people have read poetry entirely for esthetic pleasure. . . . Most people have always expected poetry to illuminate some significant aspect of life, in lines that stick in the mind." This is undeniably a reductive analysis of poetry's function and appeal, and Clausen is certain to be chastised for what appears to be nostalgia for a more traditional prosody. He may even be accused of mistaking his own difficulties with contemporary poetry for some imagined failing in the poetry itself. But readers of poetry would do well to consider his objections: it is not the clothes that don't exist, but the emperor himself who is becoming invisible.

One of the problems with defining poetry's cultural role, as indeed with that of every art form, is the lurking recognition that art is never entirely free of a certain elitism, even when it is enlisted in the service of mass social movements. Serious poetry—that is, poetry that does not shy from intellectual instruction—presumes an educated audience. The question of how many knowledgeable readers are required for serious poetry to flourish is academic—perhaps in both senses of the word. For Walt Whitman, the most angelically democratic of poets, in order "to have great poets, there must be great audiences too." It is pretty to think so, but Milton's more modest verdict of a "fit audience though few" is closer to the truth and perhaps all that poets can hope to expect.

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The Reader Replies

Breakup: A Memoir

I was relieved to learn, in the Summer 1982 issue, that I wasn't the only one drunk at that catastrophic party in Buttinger's house in 1958. It's a fascinating memoir, Lionel Abel's "Breakup"! He's wrong about one point though. Noting that "everyone present wanted to be thought a Leftist," he found that nobody knew exactly what that term meant. Well, I was present and I knew. In fact, the following year I began an article, "The Root Is Man," in my then magazine *Politics* with a lengthy definition of "Leftism" and concluded it was a meaningless term.

DWIGHT MACDONALD
East Hampton, New York

Correction

Lionel Abel, in his essay "Breakup: A Memoir" (Summer 1982), regrets having been in error about the date of the meeting to defend Pasternak. The year was 1958 not 1955.

Flannery O'Connor

Clara Claiborne Park's "Crippled Laughter: Toward Understanding Flannery O'Connor" (Spring 1982) again asks why Flannery O'Connor's unpleasant fiction "submitted her readers to tests they failed repeatedly" because they did not reach interpretations to match her letters. Park describes the letters as "a cornucopia of pleasure [written by] . . . a surpassing intelligence . . . a resilient and humorous virtue" and then concludes that the letters succeed but the stories fail because they "retain the murky hostility" of a writer confined to "the country of the sick."

But Park discounts many critics who see sympathy in O'Connor's stories, laugh with her while reading them, and reach a more sensitive reading by acknowledging that they are ironic and symbolic—satirically based in the American Romance tradition. These critics also acknowledge her characters as essentially "human."

Humor comes naturally to O'Connor: "Blessed are the smilers; their teeth shall show," she says. Her poor folk symbolize human limitation everywhere. She explains that when a writer "has a freak for his hero . . . his prophet-freak is an image of himself," not because the particular author suffers a freakish disease but because he represents "man forced out to meet the extremes of his own nature." In order to laugh at O'Connor's fiction, rather than to see it as "crippled," one must be able to laugh at oneself and to sympathize with others. The fault will finally be seen not as that of an author out of control but as that of readers who fail to consider the complexity of her art.

Park's conclusion that O'Connor "consistently failed to convey to her fallen readers the meanings she intended" because she followed "the neo-critical orthodoxy of the self-sufficiency of the work" is too simple. What editor would "better" any of her best stories by adding "some of the explicitness of the letters"?

That O'Connor wrote multidimensional stories when some critics expected realistic and dogmatically religious fiction caused a confusion of critical responses, slanderous comments about her person, and a devaluation of her art—a devaluation we ought now, given her letters, to condemn.

SUZANNE MORROW PAULSON
Department of English
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

CLARA CLAIBORNE PARK replies: "Blessed are the smilers; their teeth shall show." Indeed. Flannery O'Connor, not surprisingly, said it a lot better than I could. It's quite some beatitude; think about it.

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The University: A Backward Glance

His faith that the "academic ethos" will outlive the pernicious forces now battering it, expressed by Edward Shils in his absorbing piece in the Spring 1982 issue, is most reassuring, coming as it does from one of his authority, experience, and candor. Recalling our vain efforts at Rutgers years ago to prevent the shameful firing of my colleague Moses Finley, to which Professor Shils alludes, I can readily confirm his reminder that the profession has survived adversity in earlier decades. So it is with no intent to dampen optimism that I nonetheless add a further item to his somber anatomy of the current politicization of the American campus: faculty unions.

Professor Shils's silence on this development may reflect the fact that, with few exceptions, the most prestigious institutions have resisted the blight—so far. But for this same reason few people, even in the academic community, may be aware of the threat it now poses to the quality and integrity of higher learning in this country. In some universities that threat is now immediate.

The University of Massachusetts, my own school, is a case in point. At this moment, our president is facing a demand by the local union chapter that he fire some thirty-seven professors at the Amherst and Boston campuses. Others are soon to be added to the list. These are men and women representing virtually every discipline, who for reasons of conscience cannot support the union's activities. They have therefore refused either to pay its dues or to undergo the humiliation of submitting their consciences to the judgment of a union committee, which *may* then allow them the alternative of contributing to a still unspecified "scholarship fund." Almost all of them hold tenured appointments; several are scholars or scientists of national repute.

Much more than a revulsion at participating in strikes against students (for example) motivates their resistance. They hold that a trade union is radically incompatible with the function and conditions of a university. By their very modus operandi unions favor intellectual egalitarianism over the unalloyed pursuit and reward of excellence which are hallmarks of the scholarly enterprise. By their open advocacy of an "adversary" relationship between faculty and administration they destroy the collegiality that has always united both in a common endeavor. Worst of all in the present case, by extorting through the menace of job loss a blind approval of every provision in a negotiated labor contract, the union seriously undermines both academic freedom and tenure.

Apart from these depredations, many object to making enforced monetary contributions to political candidates and causes they may in fact oppose. (As a ray of hope in this dark prospect, the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth has recently ruled that this exaction in fact violates rights guaranteed by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution.)

Like some primitive tribal tyranny whose penal code consists exclusively of the death penalty, the union's only punishment for nonconformity is dimissal—which in many cases these days means expulsion from the profession. In such brutal circumstances, it is hardly surprising that an unknown number of our faculty, though strongly opposed to academic unions, have nonetheless been frightened into silence and submission. The ultimate resolution of this crisis is not yet at hand. In the meantime it seems vital that its existence be revealed to the academic community at large.

Emerson R. Marks
Professor of English
University of Massachusetts, Boston

Medicine in Politics

Hugh Trevor-Roper has admirably illustrated the human susceptibilities of physicians for political power in his article "Medicine in Politics" (Winter 1981/82). His memory, however, failed him when he could not think of one physician "who has risen beyond the rank of a minor minister." Salvador Allende, a pediatrician, was elected president of Chile. François Duvalier, once a physician in the World Health Organization yaws control program in the Caribbean, became the dictator of Haiti. Both of these physicians achieved political power beyond that of a minor minister in the past quarter century. Physicians played an active role in the formation of the United States on both a national and a state level. One of the most publicly prominent American medical men at that time was Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The fearsome effects of disease on human events sets the stage for the important role that healers—scientific or quack—may have in politics and warfare. The trust required for an effective patient-physician relationship allows for the seemingly mystical hold physicians have upon their patients. Trust and fear are potent tools that may be abused by scheming or malicious doctors. I agree heartily that it is better to keep physicians out of power politics. However, physicians must regulate themselves, and patients, powerful and weak, must learn to select discreet doctors. Trust and fear are not subject to legislation.

Richard V. Lee, M.D.
Chief, Department of Medicine
Children's Hospital of Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

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